Torres, Manibusan in talks about lifting price freeze. PAGE 3
Eric Atalig: Making pieces of wood come to life. PAGE 5

Hafa Adai!

75¢

Saipan Tribune

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10 vaccine freezers arrive

» 1 new case added to CNMI total

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

An Asia Pacific plane chartered by the CNMI government came in from South Korea last Nov. 30, carrying 10 ultra-cold freezers that will store the COVID-19 vaccines that will be allocated to the CNMI.

Patrick Guerrero, the governor's authorized representative, told *Saipan Tribune* that the freezers will be able to hold hundreds of COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Meanwhile, one more person was confirmed positive for COVID-19 in the CNMI last Monday, bringing the CNMI total to

See VACCINE on Page 4

Photo shows the arrival of an Asia Pacific plane chartered by the CNMI government that came in from Korea last Nov. 30 containing 10 ultra-cold freezers that will store the COVID-19 vaccines at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Dec. 1, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	6,818	34	6,852
Recovered	5,521	296	5,817
Active	889	34	923
Deaths	112	0	112
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			85,864

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	106	0	106
Traced via Travel Screening	78	0	78
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			106

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases. The CHCC COVID-19 dashboard will be undergoing maintenance until further notice.

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

AGs to Congress: Extend funding for CARES Act

CNMI Attorney General Edward Manibusan has joined a coalition of attorneys general representing 43 states, the District of Columbia, and four other U.S. territories that is urging Congress to extend the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economy Act funding until the end of 2021.

The effort is being led by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost and Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, who wrote

See CARES on Page 4

PSS: Face-to-face or remote learning?

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

As the CNMI Public School System prepares for blended learning, where students will have two days of classroom instruction and two days of remote learning, parents who do not want their children to attend face-to-face classes can continue learning remotely, said Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada.

Blended learning is set to begin in the third semester, which is next Feb. 3, 2021.

See PSS on Page 4

DPL, Hyatt to meet over expiring land lease

» DPL has yet to start official negotiations due to pending docs

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Due to some pending documents, the Department of Public Lands has yet to officially start negotiations with Hyatt Regency Saipan about its expiring land lease, but a meeting has been set this week to lay the groundwork for negotiations.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for an update

See DPL on Page 4

File photo shows the entrance to the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan.

BEA CABRERA

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

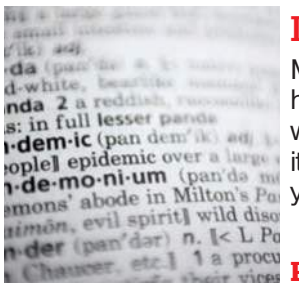
INSIDE

BUSINESS
Furusato has an affable owner who seems to know everyone who comes through its doors.

PAGE 11

NATION
Joe Biden on Monday got his first look as president-elect at the President's Daily Brief.

PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE
Merriam-Webster has chosen the word "pandemic" as its 2020 word of the year.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Senate President Victor B. Hocog presides over a regular session yesterday afternoon. The Senate passed a bill that allows senatorial districts to establish and regulate internet gaming.

Local

Senate OKs House internet gaming bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Senate passed on second and final reading yesterday a House bill that will allow senatorial districts to establish and regulate internet gaming in the CNMI.

Six senators voted "yes" for the passage of House Bill 21-31, HD1, SS1, while Sen. Paul A. Manglona (D-Rota) voted "no" and Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) abstained.

» **Manglona says he can't vote yes to an IPI legislation**

The six senators who voted for the bill's passage were Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota), vice president Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Sen. Sixto K. Igisomar (R-Saipan), Sen. Vinnie F. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), Sen. Francisco Borja (R-Tinian), and Sen. Francisco Cruz (R-Tinian). Sen. Justo Quitugua (R-Saipan) was excused from the session.

The Senate passed the bill with an amendment offered on the floor by Sablan to insert the words "Exclusion from gambling prohibition" on page 12 of the legislation. All seven senators voted for the amendment. Only Manglona voted no to the amendment.

After Hocog announced the bill's passage, Manglona stated that it is not correct that it passed the Senate on second and final reading without the Senate counsel's opinion. "I believe we're in a lame duck period. And during the lame duck period you need 3/4 votes. And you only have, if I'm not mistaken, six [votes] unless Sen. Santos changes her vote. But if I'm not mistaken, you only have six votes," Manglona said.

Hocog said that he did ask the Senate legal counsel prior to action on the bill whether this bill would require a 3/4 vote. "If that is wrong, then I have an issue with the legal counsel. I just want to make sure that that is clear. Because I would not pledge anything on the calendar if it will not meet the requirements," Hocog pointed out. He then called for a short recess to get the legal counsel's answer.

Senate legal counsel Antonette R. Villagomez said her opinion is that it only requires a simple majority.

Hocog then announced that the bill passes the Senate on its final reading.

The bill will go back to the House for adoption of the amendment.

During deliberations, Manglona said he could not vote for such a legislation, which he said is for the benefit of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC. "How can you control it when you know that the vehicle that you're going to use is about to fall down at cliff line?" asked Manglona. He said the wording of the bill states that only a holder of a casino license can operate internet gaming on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

"There is no other casino license holder on Saipan. It's IPI," the senator said, adding that there is no exclusive casino holder on Rota and Tinian.

Igisomar said every issue that Manglona brought up will be moot if this person who is about to operate this internet gaming does not qualify under the federal statutes of Illegal Gambling Business Act, The Wire Act, The Interstate Commerce No Internet Act, The Racketeer Act, Money Laundering and also Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act.

"There are so many federal statutes this company must overcome. So before we even so worry, if you believe that IPI can qualify for it, they [are going to] have to jump through the obstacles of the federal government on internet gambling to make sure that they qualify for it," Igisomar said.

Igisomar said only a casino operator can handle internet gaming.

Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) introduced the bill.

Deleon Guerrero said internet gaming, when properly regulated, does not pose any greater risk to health, safety, or welfare than other forms of properly licensed gambling. He said internet gaming can be authorized either with Commonwealth-wide law or by local law in senatorial districts that have established gambling pursuant to Article 21 Section 1 of the NMI Constitution.

He said internet gaming that is accessible by individuals in jurisdictions in which internet gaming is legal will provide a source of revenue that is independent of tourist arrivals.

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Talks of lifting price freeze

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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said he discussed with Attorney General Edward Manibusan last week about a request to lift price freeze on some goods in the CNMI.

When asked during a radio news briefing last week whether he will grant the request of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce last Nov. 12 to lift the price freeze, Torres said he and Manibusan are looking at that matter very closely.

"I will be giving a statement or perhaps new directives hopefully by Dec. 1," the governor had said. As of press time yesterday, Dec. 1, Torres has yet to issue a statement or new directives.

Last March, Torres signed Executive Order 2020-03 declaring the price freeze throughout the CNMI in a move meant to protect CNMI residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At that time, Torres said that protecting the health and safety of CNMI residents includes protecting their ability to provide for their families during this unanticipated economic downturn as a result of the coronavirus.

Heavy rains forecasted for Marianas region

Photo shows the wet ground of the area near the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center after a heavy rainfall.

NEIL FAMA

Locally heavy rainfall is possible late Wednesday and Thursday, according to the National Weather Service.

Based on the information received from the NWS in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, a disturbance to the southeast of Guam continues to move west-northwest. By Wednesday, heavier showers will move into the Mariana islands and trend toward numerous showers with the heaviest rain around Thursday afternoon, with more rain for Guam and Rota. Rainfall amounts of 3 to 5 inches are possible during this time, though local amounts could be substantially higher. For the past few days, global models suggest a surface and mid-level circulation may manifest itself southwest of Guam early Thursday, which may enhance low-level convergence and trigger plenty of showers. Heaviest showers are expected to be just south of Guam.

Localized flooding will be possible in low-lying and poor drainage areas while flash flooding will be possible in areas of the heaviest rainfall, especially near steep terrain. This developing situation will continue to be monitored closely and a flash flood watch may be issued, if conditions warrant.

The public is being advised to check storm drains in your area to make sure they are not clogged. If planning anything outdoors this week, have a backup plan in place. ***(PR)***

Widow's wrongful death lawsuit dismissed

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The U.S District Court for the NMI dismissed with prejudice the lawsuit filed by the widow of a 65-year-old Federal Aviation Administration employee who went missing after scuba diving with three other persons at the Grotto in 2018, after a settlement in the case.

Guam Chief Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood dismissed with prejudice the lawsuit filed by Madelyn Jones, who represents her late husband, John Jones, who went missing on Saipan back in 2018, against Axe Murderer Tours LLC's Harry Blalock, Green Flash LLC's Joe McDoulett, and Professional Association of Dive Instructors Worldwide Corp., and PADI America's Inc.

Dismissed with prejudice means the case is dismissed permanently and the plaintiffs can no longer refile the suit.

According to the stipulation of dismissal signed by Tydingco-Gatewood, the parties involved in the case agreed to have the lawsuit dismissed with prejudice as the matter has been resolved. The court will retain jurisdiction to enforce the settlement among the parties.

According to court information, Jones, who lives in Washington, filed a wrongful death lawsuit in federal court back in February over the death of her husband who went missing back in 2018 after scuba diving with the defendants.

Jones, through her lawyer, William M. Fitzerald, sued the defendants for negligence, wrongful death, and for breach of Consumer Protection Act. She was also suing PADI Worldwide and PADI Americas for negligence and vicarious liability. Jones asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to hold the defendants liable to pay her over $75,000 in damages, plus attorney's fees and court costs.

FAA sent John Jones to Saipan to help re-establish the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, which was damaged by Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018.

On Nov. 18, 2018, during John Jones' day off, he went scuba diving with a fellow employee, Dana Couto, together with Blalock, a PADI-certified professional dive instructor, and McDoulett, another dive instructor, at the popular dive spot, the Grotto. That's when he went missing.

The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and the Department of Public Safety searched for John Jones for several days. The search was suspended on Nov. 24, 2018.

John Jones was never found. The Superior Court issued a presumptive death certificate on March 22, 2019, with a date of death of Nov. 18, 2018.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI)
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS (DPL)
Tel.: (670) 234-3751 • Website: www.dpl.gov.mp • Email: dpl@dpl.gov.mp

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public land in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot 057 E 18, Lot 057 E 15 and Lot 057 E 29, containing a total area of approximately 6,603 square meters, more or less, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. Copies of the location of the parcels are available at the Department of Public Lands and website www.dpl.gov.mp for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is A & M Corporation. The list of officers for A & M Corporation are Mrs. Maria S. Palacios, as President, and Mr. Arnold I. Palacios, as Secretary/ Treasurer.

iii. The proposed lease is compliant with DPL regulations and was negotiated by the officers and directors of A & M Corporation, mainly Mrs. Maria S. Palacios.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of a operating a Warehouse, Maintenance, Repair Shop, Carpentry Shop, Management Office and other related activities.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term of each lease agreement is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property plus the applicable percentage of Business Gross Receipts in DPL's regulation.

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; 1st floor of the De'Ana Commercial Building, Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of PM Building, Tinian. A copy will also be available online at www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before December 11, 2020 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

NUTISIA PUT I MAPROPONI NA ATKILON TANU' PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lai Pupliku 15-2, i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku ha nå'inutisia guini put I intension ñani para u nama'atkila palu na tanu' pupbliku giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Marianas Siha. I manintiresåo na petsona siha gi halum pupbliku henerål siña muna'na'halum upiñon, imfotmasion, pat testimoñiun kinentra gi tinahguin prinoponi siha para I atkilon tanu' pupbliku. Kumu más mo'na mapribeniyini Lai Pupbliku 15-2, I sigienti na pettanesi na imfotmasion ni madimånda ni para u mapupblika.

i. I maproponi na atkilon tanu' pupbliku madiskribi komu Lot 057 E 18, Lot 057 E 15 yan Lot 057 E 29, ni ha kunsisisti i åriagikå si guaha 6,603 square meters, más pat menus, ni gaigi gi Lower Base, iya Saipan. I kopian i pumalu managuaha gi Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku yan gi website www.dpl.gov.mp para rinikono simientu.

ii. The prospective lessee i A & M Corporation. I listan ufisiåt siha para i A & M Corporation si Siñora Maria S. Palacios, komu Presidenti, yan si Siñot Arnold I. Palacios, komu Sekritåriu/Tresureru.

iii. I maproponi na atkilon"compliant" yan i regulasion DPL yan manigosiu ni ufisiåt yan direktot nu i A & M Corporation, mayot menti si Siñora Maria S. Palacios.

iv. I lessee debina u usa i lugåt para atyu ha' na rason "operating" i "Warehouse, Maintenance, Repair Shop, Carpentry Shop, Management Office" yan ottru manasosiåt na rason.

I tema nu i maproponi na kuntrå tanat kilon sabenti singku (25) åñus na tiempu.

I maproponi na atkilon gikada' såkkan gi durântin i temani kontrå tanat kilon mapegagi pusientus nu ibålin"appraised fair market" i propiedåt yan i aplikåblina pusientusnu Risibun Hina'halum Bisnis gi halum regulasion i DPL.

v. I kopian i maproponina kuntrå tanak kilon siña machuli' gi ufisinan Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku, ni gaigi gi Sigundu (2nd) na bibiendan I JoetenDandan Commercial Building iya Dandan, Saipan, giprimet (1st) na bibiendani De'Ana Commercial Building, iyaSongsongnasengsong, Luta; pat giprimet (1st) nabibiendan I PM Building, giya Tini'an. I kopia mana guaha lokkui' gi online gi www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. I Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku tåya' ha risibi tinahguin propositu siha para u ma' atkila I masuhetu na tanu' pupbliku gi Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. I Sekritårian Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku debina u aksepta tinigi' upiñon, imfotmasion, testimoniun kinentra pat tinahguin priniponi ginin I manintirisão na pattida siha gi pat åntis di Disembre 11, 2020 giufisinan Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha ni gaigi giya Saipan, Luta pat Tinian.

ARONGORONGOL TOULAP REEL POMMWOL ATKKILÓÓNOL FALUWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) reel Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap e attotoowow arongorong reel igha re mángemángil rebwe atkkilaay akkáåw faluweer toulap llól Seipél, Commonwealth Téél Falúw kka Efáng llól Marianas. Schóókka re mwuschel isiisilong kkapas, data, views, ngáre angiingi reel pommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap. Eyoor sángi Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, arongorong ikka e amwirimwiritiw ebw eakkatééwow.

i. Pommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap e bwáálóbwe Lot 057 E 18, Lot 057 E 15 me Lot 057 E 29, e lo bwe 6,603 reel square meters, elapeló ngáre eghus, iye e lo Lower Base, Seipél. Pappidil Falúw yeel eyoor me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap me bwalwóól website me www.dpl.gov.mp ngáre u mwuschel amwuri.

ii. Pommwol schóól atkkilóón nge A & M Corporation. List-al officers ngáli A & M Corporation nge Mrs. Maria S. Palacios, bwe President, me Mr. Arnold I. Palacios, bwe Sekkretóóriyo/ Treasurer.

iii. Pommwol atkkilóón nge e angúúngú fengál me mwóghutughutúl DPL me e abwungubwung sángi officers me directors-il A & M Corporation, spesiatmente Mrs. Maria S. Palacios.

iv. Schóól atkkilóón ebwe yááyá falúw ngáli mwóghutughutúl "Warehouse", "Maintenance", "Repair Shop", "Carpentry Shop", "Management Office" me akkáåw mwóghutughutikka e bwal schuulong.

Pommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón nge ruweigh me limoow ráágh.

Pommwol atkkilóónol ghal ráágh ngáligh aleew abwungu bwungúlat kkilóónnge e lo reel percentage-il "appraised fair market value" reel falúwfengál me "applicable percentage" reel "Business Gross Receipts" llól mwóghutughutúl DPL.

v. Pappidil pommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón emmwel ubwe bweibwogh mereel Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer toulap, iye e lo 2nd floor reel Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Dandan, Seipél; 1st floor reel De'Ana Commercial Building, Apilómwol Songsong, Luuta' ngáre 1st floor reel PM Building, Tchiliyól. Ebwalyoor pappidil mille online me www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap rese bweibwogh pommw iye e siiweli falúw iye re apasa me Lower Base, Seipél.

vii. Sekkretóóriyal Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap emmweli lbweibwogh ischil mángemáng, views, angii ngáre pommwiye re siiweli sángi schóókka re mwuschel wóól ngáremmwalil Disembre 11, 2020 me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap me Seipél, Luuta, ngáre Tchiliyól.

Man in crash walks away unscathed

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The man involved in the vehicle accident along As Terlaje Hill last Friday came out of the accident unscathed, but still faces charges for allegedly driving under the influence.

According to DPS spokesperson Dre Pangelinan yesterday, the driver of the vehicle had been released from the Commonwealth Health Center with no injuries sustained.

"Driver at NMC was not harmed, was uninjured but we did call medics to make sure," he said.

In a video clip sent to *Saipan Tribune* that recorded the accident last Friday, the vehicle, what seemed to be a sedan, was speeding up As Terlaje Hill at around midnight before losing control—driving off the road and falling into a nearby ditch and turning turtle—near the accident-prone intersection near the Northern Marianas College.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the total number of people who have died in crashes at this specific intersection is three.

UOG researchers work to stop ironwood tree decline

With U.S. Department of Agriculture grants totaling almost $370,000, researchers from the University of Guam and other institutions are in the process of analyzing termites to assess their role in infecting what is now more than 20% of Guam's ironwood trees, locally known as *gago*, with a deadly bacterium.

More than 18 years ago, the ironwood tree—a hearty, salt-resistant species important for soil erosion control and a protector of vegetation from the wind—unexpectedly began dying off in Guam. This condition is now referred to as "ironwood tree decline." It took another six years to find its main culprit: the bacterial wilt pathogen known as *Ralstonia solanacearum*.

Since then, under a longstanding effort funded by various USDA sources—the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, the McIntire-Stennis Capacity Grant, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Renewable Resources Extension Act Capacity Grant—UOG researchers have been monitoring and surveying the trees to better understand and stop bacterial attacks, planting new trees selectively bred to be resistant to the bacterium, and more recently, pinpointing how termites might spread the wilt bacterium.

Recent evidence points to the *Nasutitermes takasagoensis* termite, which has a taste for ironwood trees, scientifically known as *Casuarina equisetifolia.*

"We know the termites chew on the roots, so it's very possible that the termites are carrying bacteria either internally or on the outside of their body," said principal investigator Robert L. Schlub, a professor with a doctorate in plant pathology and a researcher in UOG's Cooperative Extension and Outreach unit. "Because of this correlation between the termites and disease, we think they are likely the means of transmitting it."

In collaboration with the University of Hawaii and Louisiana State University, a UOG team collected termites and samples from ironwood trees. Next, they will extract the guts of these termites to determine if the wilt or other pathogenic bacteria are present. That will confirm the termite's potential to spread the bacteria responsible for the ironwood decline.

Tree samples will be sent to the University of Hawaii, where co-principal investigator Mohammad Arif, who holds a doctorate in biosciences, and his graduate students will sequence and identify the bacterial strains with a rapid assay test developed by former graduate student Sujan Paudel. Efforts to analyze the termites' guts will be led by LSU's Claudia Husseneder, another co-principal investigator.

Under the grant, work has also included planting ironwood cultivars new to Guam in hope that resistant trees may be identified—a move with which China has found success. Since 2012, hundreds of trees grown from seeds from 21 countries have been planted around Guam, including on farms, a golf course, and on UOG research stations. All of the trees remain disease-free. Over the next two years, hundreds more will be planted in dozens of new locations.

The research and funding to reduce ironwood tree decline in Guam will continue until 2022. This month Schlub was awarded additional funding for 2021 and 2022 through the USDA Hatch program to determine which other plant species in Guam may harbor the ironwood pathogen.

"The goal of the projects," Schlub said, "is to provide new scientific insight so we can better manage the problem, but also shrink the footprint of the bacterial disease and reduce the likelihood that it will spread to the neighboring islands, Hawaii, and the mainland." ***(PR)***

NMI Museum hosting Christmas tree competition

The NMI Museum of History and Culture will be hosting a Christmas tree competition for any non-profit organization or schools that are interested in joining. Spaces are limited and this is open for those interested in competition or non-competition.

The people of the CNMI have endured many hardships, from the devastating effects of Super Typhoon Yutu to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NMI Museum wants to help bring the holiday spirit to everyone. Prizes will be awarded to winning organizations or schools. We encourage anyone who is interested to contact the museum at 664-2160 for more details. Participants may begin setting up on Dec. 3, 2020. ***(PR)***

PSS

From Page 1

According to Ada, teachers on Tinian, Saipan Southern High School, and Marianas High School want to begin blended learning early, while William S. Reyes Elementary School and Kagman Elementary School have already started blended learning.

Ada added that schools are preparing themselves now because they don't want to wait until February. In blended learning, students will attend two days of face-to-face classes and two days of remote or online learning weekly.

In order to comply with COVID-19 protocols of social distancing, half of the students will be attending face-to-face classes on Tuesday and Thursday, the other half will be online, and then vice-versa on Wednesday and Friday.

Since Ada advocates for mental health, the government austerity day on Mondays will be reserved for providing social-emotional support to students and school staff, follow-up activities, remediation/intervention as needed, collaborative teacher planning, and professional development.

In a previous interview with Ada, he stated that PSS is collecting data on student attendance and level of engagement in face-to-face learning, for which the number of students per classroom has been increased from 10 to 15 students in a class.

Additionally, Ada stated that he's advised principals to reach out to parents, whose children are struggling, to participate in face-to-face classes.

CARES

From Page 1

the letter signed by the attorneys general and sent it to Congress yesterday, urging members to extend the Dec. 30, 2020, deadline of the CARES Act.

"As a direct beneficiary of the CARES Act funding, the CNMI is set to give up any remaining subsidy under the CARES Act at the end of the year," said Manibusan. "To further support the CNMI, I join my colleagues of attorneys general urging U.S. Congress to extend the CARES Act deadline in order to fully expend the relief funding aiding the CNMI during these unprecedented times."

COVID-19 has negatively impacted nearly every facet of American society. In anticipation of unprecedented costs and economic disruption stemming from the pandemic, Congress passed the CARES Act in March. The move provided more than $2 trillion in economic stimulus to state and local governments in an effort to combat the impacts of the pandemic.

One of the restrictions placed on the funding, however, limits the money's use to expenses incurred between March 1, 2020, and Dec. 30, 2020.

As the pandemic continues to set record infections, states and local communities will continue to incur COVID-related costs beyond 2020. By extending the deadline, communities nationwide will be able to be more strategic with the use of CARES Act funds, the attorneys general stated in their letter to Congress. ***(PR)***

VACCINE

From Page 1

106. The individual was identified by travel screening and confirmed diagnosis through testing upon arrival. The individual has been safely in quarantine and was moved to the designated isolation area for close monitoring. CHCC has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the new confirmed case, including passengers on the same flight.

Prior to getting the 10 vaccine freezers, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. reached out to local stores to inquire if they have these ultra-cold freezers but no one on the islands had them, Guerrero said. He said they went to the United States first but even the top known brands did not carry any ultra-cold freezers.

One of the first promising COVID-19 vaccine by Pfizer must be stored at the ultra-cold temperature of -70°C. These kinds of freezers are rare outside of medical research facilities. Due to the vaccines needing to be stored at such a freezing temperature, these freezers have been in demand and are sold out until June 2021.

Guerrero said the CNMI would not be able to get one until next year in June, which prompted him to look at Korea because of its technical expertise and the fact that both have similar power infrastructures. This means both countries are able to supply each other's electronics and use the same amount of power.

Guerrero said that once he found the freezers, he wasn't able to make a payment right away and lost some units to Australia. In fact, the CNMI was in competition with other countries for these freezers. "We competed heavily on these and finally made a deal with the company through our supplier and we were able to get 10 of the units," said Guerrero.

Even if the vaccines aren't in yet, Guerrero stated that it is essential that CHCC prepares and set up the equipment in a secure place. A unique feature of these freezers is that they can be controlled and their temperature monitored remotely.

The plan is to have two freezers on Rota and two freezers on Tinian, and six on Saipan. That way, in case one unit breaks down, both Rota and Tinian will still have a backup freezer. This is not official yet, though, said Guerrero.

Also, he doesn't think that the CNMI will receive thousands of COVID-19 vaccines at a time, but if the CNMI does, there will be enough space.

As for how much the CNMI government paid for these freezers, Guerrero stated that all 10 units cost below $150,000. Each freezer cost between $12,000 and $13,000, plus a few other necessary accessories to go along with it.

Guerrero stated that the CNMI government paid for the units out of pocket, but this is an eligible reimbursable expense through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"We already have the guidance that says 'ultra-cold freezer are eligible for reimbursement,' so we would be submitting these costs to FEMA and look to reimburse the CNMI government, but we spent our own money first," said Guerrero.

When asked if he would take the vaccine, Guerrero stated that because he's has more information than an average person in regards to risk factors, he and his family will still take the vaccine. "I take science and health, always weigh out on the benefits, and there's always a risk, but I think with what we're dealing with right now...the information that we're getting right now tells us that it's safe to take," said Guerrero.

The CNMI has yet to receive the vaccines because it has not yet been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for Emergency Use Authorization.

DPL

From Page 1

about Hyatt's lease negotiations, Deveney Dela Cruz, special assistant to DPL Secretary Marianne Teregeyo-Concepcion, said that, according to their Real Estate Division director Bonnie Royal, they are still waiting on certain requirements from Hyatt, which are necessary to start negotiations.

Dela Cruz confirmed, though, that DPL and Hyatt will have a meeting tomorrow, Thursday. The meeting is not open to the public.

Dela Cruz recently disclosed that they already received an official proposal packet from Hyatt regarding their public land lease.

Dela Cruz said that in order for DPL to start the negotiation process for a new matured lease agreement, they must first receive an official proposal from the current lessee.

She said DPL only received an official proposal packet from Hyatt's current lessee, Saipan Portopia Hotel Corp., last Oct 20, but the package was incomplete.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres earlier said that he would like to see Hyatt get the lease extension.

Hyatt's 40-year public land lease will expire in December 2021. The land lease of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, which is located adjacent to Hyatt, is supposed to expire in June 2021, but it just got a new 40-year lease.

The recent enactment of Public Law 20-84 increases the terms of public land leases for up to 40 years, plus an extension of 15 years, for a total of 55 years. It also authorizes certain public land leases to be amended and extend existing lease terms up to 55 years.

Making pieces of wood come to life

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

SPOTLIGHT

Eric Atalig, 52, started woodwork and carpentry just a couple years ago. What started off as a hobby later turned into a passion that then became E's Custom Made Outdoor Furniture.

Surrounded by nature all his life—having been born and raised on Saipan—he discovered a passion for giving new life to trees that had been cut down and found them good wood to work on.

"It started out as a small hobby where I would collect trees that were cut down, turn them into a post, sand it to make *pala-pala* [pavilion]. …I started in my 40s because I just wanted to do something different. …It evolved into making small coffee tables for my daughters and family," Atalig said. "As I got better and more comfortable with this skill, I started investing in power tools and studied more. A lot of it came from YouTube and I commend the people who share their skills and knowledge on the net… just unselfish. Eventually, it just became natural that you don't realize until months down the line and finally I said to myself, 'Okay, I have a knack for this.'"

Armed with no woodwork education, a $20 Makita sander and a $30 drill, Atalig said that even with simple tools and as long as you keep at it, one will understand how the tools work and develop techniques along the way. "I am self-taught and I am still learning," he said

Atalig distinctly remembers the first piece he created: a coffee table so unique that the wood pattern appears to change or move. "…It was an accident that turned out to be my best pieces and that became one of my unique approaches in making wood furniture. I look at the material and then think of something that I can do with it. I developed this knack where I look at the grain in the wood, then I could see how it connects to make into a whole piece of furniture," he said.

Atalig's eye for detail is his unique selling point. "When I work on something, it's never the same as I always have something different because I want to keep pushing the limits. …Each woodwork becomes a nice controversial piece where you don't have to put anything on it because it's art. This is why I keep making more," he said.

BEA CABRERA
Eric Atalig poses in his shop where he makes out-of-the-box wooden furniture for his family and clients.

"I also like mixing different kinds of wood. …Be out of the box, like, 'What if I mix ironwood with monkey pod wood and then make it into a cutting board?' 'What if I made a 7-foot x 3-foot picnic table out of 1 x 2 where you could actually lift it and not struggle with it?' or an outdoor dining table that has character, something nice to just display for visitors. …I like doing the uncommon," he added.

Atalig's business, E's Custom Made Outdoor Furniture in San Vicente, was established three years ago and is where people go to have their furniture repaired, refurbished, or custom made. "It's a small shop and if you expect ready-made pieces or mass production, I am not yet ready or comfortable with that. Plus, it is hard to display them. …I can work on a picnic table in less than a week, a hardwood coffee table can be done in two to four weeks. …The finish date is based on the availability of the piece, like if it is not dry, I am not going to sell it to you because I don't want to sell a bad item," he said.

"I like brainstorming with the client. …We sit down and talk: What do you like? What is your style? Sometimes they would show me a picture of an idea, then determine measurements on how it will fit in a room. …Sometimes I have ideas and show a different perspective: 'What is we do it like this?' …I make it clear that I do rustic, not fine woodwork, and they end up understanding it and we just work around what they want," he added

One of Atalig's goals is to join the Flame Tree Arts Festival where local talents and artists are highlighted. "If the pandemic is over and we have the Flame Tree Arts Festival back, I plan to join and showcase out-of-this-world pieces for display. It might be pricey but it is something that I want to put out there and share with the community. If someone wants to learn from it and take it, I will say do it. I do not worry about sharing ideas because each person is unique and my imagination is where my work comes from," he said.

"I want all my clients to be able to use and display the furniture I make for them and not regret it. Part of island living is that sometimes we don't have a choice but to take whatever is available. I want to make a homeowner happy knowing that he or she has a unique piece in the house. …I do not really care about mass production because that makes fast money. I create according to what the client likes and make sure to get as close as possible to what they envision," he added.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-21-001

ROTA WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PHASE- 2 PROJECT REPLACEMENT OF FLOW METER AND PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE (W17-053)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project in Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists, in general removal and installation of gate valve assembly, PRV, flow meter, strainer, pressure gauge and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **120 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **December 3, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Rota Directors Office, Sinapalo, Rota.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-001, Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project Replacement of Flow Meter and Pressure Release Valve"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 22, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 7, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Purchasing Technician Senior via email - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

AMENDMENT NO. 1
Notice of Re-opening of the Distribution of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)-COVID Program Pre-Applications

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) wishes to announce the re-opening of the distribution of pre-applications of the ESG-COVID program made possible through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As stated on the Office of the Governor's Press Release, dated July 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the CNMI a total allocation of $1,090,630 in ESG-COVID funds to provide financial assistance for CNMI households, specifically for rental assistance, rental arrears, utility allowance, and security and utility deposits. The assistance period is for a total of (12) months and will be on a first come, first serve basis. NMHC has allocated 25% of the grant for the elderly and disabled population. The purpose of the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)-COVID program is to assist individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic (e.g. furloughed, reduction of hours, living in substandard conditions which poses an increased risk of exposure to the disease, etc.)
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien
- Must meet the income limits (less than 50% of the area median income). See FY 2020 HUD income limits below
- Must be literally homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless and have no other housing options

Application Steps

- Pick up a pre-application at the NMHC Offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota or print an application made available on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net.
  Link:https://nmhcgov.net/resources/files/2020%20ESG%20Pre-application%20V2%20updated%2006_29_20.pdf
- Once the pre-application is completed and submitted to the NMHC Offices (you may submit at the front office or in the Drop Box located in front of the building), the case workers will assess the pre-application and determine whether the applicant is eligible for the program. If the applicant is eligible, the case worker will schedule an appointment and immediately notify the applicant on the date and time of intake. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, a notification will be sent to the applicant.
- The case worker will inform the eligible applicant of the next steps once the application process has been completed.

If you have already applied for the ESG-COVID program, the NMHC case workers are currently assessing your pre-applications and you will be contacted for the next steps. On August 21, 2020, NMHC stopped taking pre-applications in order to conduct the screening of a significant number of pre-applications and also to conduct case management. ***NMHC re-reoped the pre-application process on October 28, 2020. You may pick up an HESG pre-application at the NMHC, Saipan Central Office, Rota Field Office, and Tinian Field office. The distribution of pre-applications will extend from November 30, 2020 to December 31, 2020.*** Should you have any questions or need special accommodations, please contact Zenie Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, Tricia Tenorio, Planner, or Sweetielyn Sokau, Planning Assistant, at the 234-6866/7689/9447.

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Island Snapshots

TREE TRIMMING TIME

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang poses with his team that did their annual tree trimming along Beach Road and the Beach Road Pathway about two weeks ago. NEIL FAMA

A claw truck being maneuvered by a crewmember of the Saipan Mayor's Office picks up the cut branches from a tree and drops it into the truck's cargo hold for disposal. NEIL FAMA

SHOUTOUT FOR DONATIONS

Tinian and Saipan volunteers, former Miss Earth 2019 Leisha Deleon Guerrero, and second runner-up Miss Water 2019 Jan Zowie Cruz solicit donations for the Ohala Foundation last Nov. 21 from passing motorists at the Atkins Kroll intersection and the Oleai Pavilion in front of Modern Stationary on Saipan. NEIL FAMA

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPSAL
RFP NO.: RFP21-OGM-019

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 28, 2020 TIME: 9:30 A.M.

"2020 2MW UTILITY SCALE GRID CONNECTED ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE ISLAND OF ROTA. A PROJECT UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

PRE-PROSAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, CAPITOL HILL – SAIPAN ON **DECEMBER 11, 2020 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME.** ALL PARTICIPANTS/ATTENDEES ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK AND EXERCISE SOCIAL DISTANCING FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEETING.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO **MR. EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR., ADMINISTRATOR**, VIA E-MAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, DECEMBER 14, 2020.**

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OGM

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
RFP NO.: ITB21-COTA/FTA-020

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 28, 2020 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF EIGHT (8) MEDIUM-DUTY LOW FLOOR 2020 OR NEWER ADA ACCESIBLE TRANSIT BUSES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF TRANSITY AUTHORITY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE IN WRITING TO MS. ALFREDA P. CAMACHO, SA FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, VIA E-MAIL TO alfreda.camacho@gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, DECEMBER 11, 2020.** QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3.-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ALFREDA P. CAMACHO
SA, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

/S/ FRANCISCO AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
San Jose Village • P.O. Box 502149 • Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. Nos: (670) 234-7145/7146/6293/6245 • Fax No.: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
2021-CDA-02-RFP

Closing Date: Friday, December 18, 2020 • Time: 9:00 a.m.

"FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDITS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021 and 2022"

Copies of the proposal package may be picked up at the Commonwealth Development Authority office, 2nd Floor, CDA Building, Oleai, Saipan, during regular working hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

THE PROVISIOINI OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTIONS 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTIGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/S/ **MANUEL A. SABLAN**
Executive Director

/S/ **FRANCISCO C. AGUON**
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

FAC remains the same for the month of December—CUC

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. said yesterday that its Fuel Adjustment Charge remains at $0.11165 per kilowatt-hour for the month of December.

Although there has been a slight increase in the Mean of Plats Singapore monthly pricing from October 2020 to December 2020 as notified by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc., the increase did not equal or exceed a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC Electric kWh Rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component is the CUC Base Rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and debt service. This Base Rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, to adjust (up or down) the FAC pass-through rate when the Mean of Plans Singapore monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate.

CUC first instituted the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause in 2009 to recover fuel and fuel related costs, a system also used by power providers in Guam and the Virgin Islands. In May 2015, the CPUC authorized CUC to change the name of LEAC to FAC to provide customers a more accurate description of the electric rate. ***(CUC)***

SCC hosts 'scholarship' membership meeting today

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce's final general membership meeting for 2020 will be held today, Dec. 2, 2020, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

At the same meeting, 12 students from the Northern Marianas College will be awarded $1,000 each in scholarships. These students aspire to give back to the CNMI community and help alleviate the CNMI's workforce needs.

The SCC fundraises every year to give $12,000 in scholarships to students from the CNMI to fund their higher education. This year was no different. Despite the hardships of COVID-19, the SCC membership pushed forward to raise these funds.

Also today, the SCC will be announcing the winner of the social media "Buy in the CNMI" campaign, where one lucky winner will receive $500 in gift cards to Chamber member establishments of their choice. SCC will also hear from President's Circle Member IT&E as well as announce the 2020 Nominees for Business Person of the Year.

A plate lunch will be served at 11:30am and the meeting will begin promptly at noon. The luncheon fee is $25 for Chamber members and $35 for non-members.

Due to COVID-19 protocols, RSVP is required to attend the GMM. To RSVP, visit https://tinyurl.com/decgmm2020 before 9am today, Dec. 2, or by calling the Chamber office at (670) 234-7150. ***(SCC)***

MONTHLY CLEANUP

The Saipan Unity Lions Club, along with the Teen Unity Leos Club, held their monthly beach cleanup at their adopted Tanapag beach site last Nov. 29, 2020. The community service was led by SULC president Alice Barbo and Leo president Vicky Ancheta. There were 23 Lions and seven Leos who attended and collected 14 bags of litter.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Learn about federal contracting in free webinars

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) is offering free_live webinars for December 2020.

Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ Dec. 3 – Cybersecurity: Federal Contractor Responsibilities – We will discuss what Federal contractors can do to make sure they are complying with DOD requirements with respect to keeping data protected. DOD's upcoming Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification and the DFARS Interim Rule will be discussed.

■ Dec. 10 – Responding to Requests for Proposals – We will walk participants through the common sections and clauses of an RFP as well as provide tips on developing a proposal in response to an RFP.

■ Dec. 17 – SBIR/STTR Programs – The Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs encourage small businesses to engage in Federal Research and Development that has the potential for commercialization. We will explain the programs and show how innovators can get involved.

■ Dec. 23 – Service Contract Act – The Service Contract Act requires contractors and subcontractors performing services on prime contracts in excess of $2,500 to pay service employees prevailing wages. We will discuss the details of the SCA and how contractors can stay in compliance.

■ Dec. 30 – Buy American Act – The Buy American Act can be frustrating for government contractors. The Guam PTAC will discuss the BAA and offer some guidance on how to stay in compliance.

Register on our website, http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21 – 009
Opening Date: November 18, 2020 • Closing Date: December 2, 2020

POSITION TITLE:	**Engineer, Senior (Diesel Power Plant)**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power Generation**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$45,326.00 - $61,190.00 per annum, Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The Engineer Senior is distinguished by his/her ability to view the engineer designs and projects. The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- The Engineer Senior position will have accountability and responsibility dedicated to supervising the engineering functions in the Power Plant, Focus on the application of technical skills required in the analysis and reporting of plant electrical equipment and related systems, Maintain equipment and machinery within the standard operating conditions and evaluate performance as needed per Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) recommendations, Oversee operation, maintenance and repairs of plan equipment and auxiliaries to ensure adherence within applicable specification and OEM standard.
- Compiling running hours and preventive maintenance performed of each engine/equipment and machinery and prepare preventive maintenance scheduling.
- Prepare engineering design calculations, engineering drawings, utilizing programs and Computer Aided Design (CAD).
- Prepare a variety of engineering monthly reports and correspondence.
- Perform equipment failure analysis of equipment/machineries/auxiliaries and prepare incident reports.
- Compiling data and preparing regulatory reports; operate and maintain complex instrumentation, equipment and/or testing equipment; Troubleshooting complex maintenance and operational problems; Diagnose and perform mechanical failure analysis and provide recommendation to prevent reoccurrence.
- Supervise other Trades staff including assisting in the performance evaluations and coordinating training; Ensures that employees follow policies and procedures and maintain a healthy and safe working environment; Prepare schedule of activities or special projects and ensures necessary parts, materials and tools are available; Provides technical advice, support and guidance to staff, other CUC department and other agencies; Performs technical design on mechanical system; Performs inventory and supply checks of tools, equipment, parts and materials; Identifies resource needs and processes requisitions.
- Ensures availability of resources to meet project and operational needs; Gathers and compiles data's, prepares and maintains regulatory and status reporting; Performs inspections of projects and operations; Ensures policies and procedures are adhered to, and that service quality and productivity levels are maintained; Processing requisitions to meet resource needs for projects and operations.
- Preparing and maintaining regulatory, status reports and related documentation.
- Attends to trouble calls after normal hours; Practices SAFETY; Cleans, organizes and maintains work areas.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: Bachelor Degree in Engineering and four (4) years of general professional, engineering experience.
Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Engineering Principles, practices and procedures of assigned service area. Mathematical concepts; Inventory maintenance practices; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology. Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Engineering Principles, practices and procedures of assigned service area. Mathematical concepts; Inventory maintenance practices; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards. Monitoring, evaluating, prioritizing and assigning specific duties to staff. Preparing a variety of technical reports and/or documentation. Presenting technical information to management, public groups, and other related individuals. Preparing specifications plans, and cost estimates. Performing and overseeing skilled journey level maintenance, operations and installation. Performing inspections of projects and operations to ensure quality and productivity levels. Ensuring the adherence to policies and procedures. Troubleshooting complex maintenance and operational issues. Recommending and implementing solutions. Utilizing CAD programs to prepare plans for small projects and exhibits; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications. Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- **Licensing:**
  - Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
- **Physical Demands:**
  - Occasional lifting of objects; Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21 – 010
Opening Date: November 19, 2020 • Closing Date: December 4, 2020

POSITION TITLE:	**Public Information Officer**
DEPARTMENT:	**Administration Office**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$42,411.00 - $57,255.00 per annum, Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Executive Director or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Serves as a liaison between CUC, the media and the public; plans, coordinates and disseminates public information utilizing various forms of communication in an effort to educate and promote the organization's projects and activities.
- Prepares copy of news releases; content for the CUC website; articles; newsletters; reports and creates various collateral materials.
- Develops and coordinates public outreach programs; researches and identifies outreach needs and recommends communication methods for the provision of information.
- Received and responds to inquiries from the public, internal departments, and other agencies as well as coordinating with CUC Call center, may serve as representative at public meetings to address questions or issues, and to provide community updates.
- Designs and implements public information campaigns, events and programs; determines campaign or program goals and expected outcomes; plans, coordinates and prepares materials and activities to meet goals and objectives.
- Researches, gathers and maintains information and communication materials and archives.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: Bachelor Degree in Journalism, Public Administration or related field and 4 years of related public information experience. Proficiency in multiple languages (such as legally recognized language in the CNMI: English, Chamorro and Carolinian) is a plus.
Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth State and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Public relations principles and techniques; Communication methods; Media relations principles, Customer relations principles; Modern Office Technology.
Skills in: Interpreting and applying Federal, State, and/or Local laws, codes, rules, regulations and standards; serving as a public information liaison and representative to the community; Planning, coordinating and disseminating public information; Determining information needs and promoting and educating the public; Preparing news releases, communications content, articles and collateral materials; Listening and responding to inquiries and effectively conveying information; Utilizing critical thinking and social perception to identify issues; Researching and preparing recommendations and responses; Designing and implementing programs and events; Measuring effectiveness of program delivery for future enhancements; Gathering and maintaining communication materials and information; utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public and other to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- **Licensing:**
  - Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

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How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

A necessary plan for Middle America

Every election season, pundits and politicians watch with keen focus the people of Middle America to gauge the heart's desire of the Heartland. The influence of flyover America matters for those moments in time.

Then, when the votes are counted and the newly elected leaders are installed, the region seems to be all but forgotten and virtually unheard.

But some leaders in the upper Appalachian region and the Ohio River Valley are creating some clamor, and federal officials had better listen up.

A nascent movement dubbed the "Marshall Plan for Middle America" needs support—both financial and political from our nation's capital—to succeed. And succeed it must.

Independent, nonpartisan and data-driven research predicts massive job losses in the coming years from the decline of the fossil-fuel industry. It's critical to build a barricade before the coming economic tsunami.

A team of mayors from cities in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky are pushing this neo-Marshall Plan as an initiative that would seed the growth of climate-friendly industry. The effort is supported by policy and academic research from the University of Pittsburgh Center for Sustainable Business, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Steel Valley Authority, Heartland Capital Strategies Network and the Enel Foundation.

The predictions are dire: without action, job losses of 100,000 in the Ohio River Valley region alone in less than 10 years.

The backers of this modern-day Marshall Plan—a reference to the plan that was forged to rebuild post-World War II Europe—believe that renewable energy development will win out against fossil fuels and that now is the time to get prepared for the fallout of the battle.

Getting ready means getting help from our leaders in Washington, D.C.

The proponents of the new Marshall Plan want block grants to help local governments retrofit vehicle fleets as well as commercial and residential building stock; low-interest loans for zero-carbon energy generation; tax incentives for private production of clean energy equipment and supply chain development; and grants for workforce training, education, research and development of advanced clean energy technology.

Essentially, they want our federal leaders to be shoulder to shoulder with local government and private industry. In sum: a public-private partnership that reaches from Washington, D.C., to Pittsburgh and Morgantown, Huntington and Youngstown, Dayton and Columbus, Cincinnati and Louisville.

Without this team approach, communities that have hitched their economic fortune to fossil fuels—communities that already face harsh economic challenges—could collapse as the world reckons with climate change.

The Marshall Plan for Middle America believes $60 billion in federal help could instigate some 270,000 direct and indirect jobs, plus another 140,000 jobs created when those 270,000 employees spend their increased incomes

See AMERICA on next page

NOW THAT THANKSGIVING IS OVER. I NEED TO EXERCISE. BUT IT'S TOO MUCH WORK.
TO GET ON THE TREADMILL?
NO, TO CLEAN THE TREADMILL.
DIST. BUNG FEATURES SYNDICATE/LVRJ
LAS VEGAS SUN 2020
MIKE SMITH

The dangerous seduction of 'back to normal'

By ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune News Service

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It.

"Life is going to return to normal," Joe Biden promised last week in a Thanksgiving address to the nation. He was talking about life after COVID-19, but you could be forgiven if you thought he was also making a promise about life after Donald Trump.

It's almost impossible to separate the two. To the extent that voters gave Biden a mandate, it was to end both scourges and make America normal again.

Despite the grim resurgence of COVID-19, Dr. Anthony Fauci—the public health official Trump ignored and then muzzled, with whom Biden's staff is now conferring—sounded guardedly optimistic last week. He said vaccines will allow "a gradual accrual of more normality as the weeks and the months go by as we get well into 2021."

Normal. You could almost hear America's giant sigh of relief, similar to the one felt when Trump implicitly conceded the election by allowing the transition to begin.

It is comforting to think of both COVID-19 and Trump as intrusions into normality, aberrations from routines that prevailed before.

When Biden entered the presidential race last year, he said history would look back on Trump as an "aberrant moment in time."

The end of both aberrations conjures up a former America that, by contrast, might appear quiet and safe, even boring.

Trump called Biden "the most boring human being I've ever seen," and Americans seem to be just fine with that.

Biden's early choices for his Cabinet and senior staff fit the same mold—"all boring picks," tweeted the Atlantic's Graeme Wood, referring to Biden's foreign policy team, "who, if you shook them awake and appointed them in the middle of the night at any time in the last decade, could have reported to their new jobs and started work competently by dawn." Hallelujah.

All of Biden's designees, including Janet Yellen for Treasury secretary and Antony Blinken for secretary of state, are experienced and competent—refreshing, especially after Trump's goon squads. And they're acceptable both to mainstream Democrats and to progressives.

They also stand out for their abilities not to stand out. There is no firebrand among them, no Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders (at least not so far).

For the same reasons, they're unlikely to stir strong opposition from Republicans—a necessity for Senate confirmation, particularly if Democrats fail to win the two Senate runoffs in Georgia on Jan. 5.

And they're unlikely to demand much attention from an exhausted and divided public.

Boring, reassuring, normal—these are Biden's great strengths. But he needs to be careful. They could also be his great weaknesses.

That's because any return to "normal" would be disastrous for America.

Normal led to Trump. Normal led to the coronavirus.

Normal is four decades of stagnant wages and widening inequality when almost all economic gains went to the top. Normal is 40 years of shredded safety nets, and the most expensive but least adequate health care system in the modern world.

Normal is also growing corruption of politics by big money—an economic system rigged by and for the wealthy.

Normal is worsening police brutality.

Normal is climate change now verging on catastrophe.

Normal is a GOP that for years has been actively suppressing minority votes and embracing white supremacists. Normal is a Democratic Party that for years has been abandoning the working class.

Given the road we were on, Trump and COVID-19 were not aberrations. They were inevitabilities. The moment we are now in—with Trump virtually gone, Biden assembling his Cabinet, and most of the nation starting to feel a bit of relief—is a temporary reprieve.

If the underlying trends don't change, after Biden we could have Trumps as far as the eye can see. And health and environmental crises that make the coronavirus another step toward Armageddon.

Hence the paradox. America wants to return to a reassuring normal, but Biden can't allow it. Complacency would be deadly. He has to both calm the waters and stir the pot.

It's a mistake to see this challenge as placating the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. It's about dealing with problems that have worsened for decades and if left unattended much longer will be enormously destructive.

So the central question: In an exhausted and divided America that desperately wants a return to normal, can Biden find the energy and political will for bold changes that are imperative?

The coming anti-COVID restriction backlash

By RICH LOWRY
© 2020 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

It already seems clear that the first major political and culture eruption of the Biden years will be a roiling populist backlash against the next round of COVID restrictions.

We saw this sentiment play out in sporadic anti-lockdown demonstrations last spring and it has driven ongoing resistance to masks, but it is, in all likelihood, about to reach an entirely new level - fueled by exhaustion with the virus, elite hypocrisy and the shattered credibility of the public-health establishment.

The ascension of Joe Biden will add force to the reaction. It is an iron law of American politics that whichever party doesn't control the presidency will suspect the other of plotting to impose a tyranny, so the fear and loathing of COVID restrictions, somewhat muted on the right while Donald Trump was president, will deepen and intensify.

The right's populism and limited-government impulse, which separated in the Trump years, will presumably be reunited in the push against lockdowns in a way that they haven't been since the Tea Party.

"Lockdowns. Mask police. Curfews. What about freedom?" asked conservative Rep. Jim Jordan in a recent tweet, forecasting things to come.

It'd be much better if we could find a prudent middle path through the next several months, as the pandemic enters its worst phase and as new vaccines arrive that will soon start changing everything. But a significant segment of the American public has lost its patience with a new normal that has, at times, been arbitrary and poorly thought through.

When the new virus first hit our shores and we knew much less about it, the case for lockdowns was strong to keep the health-care system from getting overwhelmed and to play for time (and better treatments). In retrospect, though, the nationwide lockdowns of the spring closed down some states before they experienced their initial waves of the disease, imposing economic, mental health and medical costs without much upside.

After that kind of sacrifice, it's hard to double-dip and ask people to do it again.

Especially when the latest advice ran against the grain of one of the nation's oldest traditions, namely Thanksgiving, and when prominent pro-restriction officeholders discredit themselves with their own behavior.

In mid-November, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot told residents of her city: "You must cancel the normal Thanksgiving plans. Particularly if they include guests that do not live in your immediate household." Yet just days earlier she happily had joined a crowd celebrating Joe Biden's election victory. During this moment, the political class should have been especially sensitive to playing by its own rules, when those rules have been so relatively easy to bear for the elite and so punishing for ordinary workers.

To simplify and generalize, at the start of this year, they downplayed the virus for fear that it would stoke xenophobia. Then, they lurched into five-alarm-fire mode.

They poured cold water on masks before turning around and insisting on them despite ambiguous evidence on the efficacy of cloth masks.

They preached the gospel of social distancing until mass Black Lives Matter protests erupted, blessing these huge, often unruly gatherings because fighting racism is supposedly a paramount public-health issue.

The upshot will be poisonous contention in the months ahead before the advent of that most American solution—the clever technological fix, in the form of transformative vaccines.

Put on the handcuffs, hide under the bed and stay there

By JAY AMBROSE
Tribune News Service

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service. Readers may email him at speaktojay@aol.com.

We've never seen anything like it, have we—some state governments not just advising people on how to spend Thanksgiving with their families, but dictating how they do it or whether they do it at all? Here was totalitarianism unknown in American history, cops just maybe arresting you if there were too many people at the table, and it did not stop there.

Some states have also dictated how many people can go to church despite precautions being taken. And, yes, it is totally proper to give advice, to say lives could be at stake from COVID-19 if large numbers were gathering in close proximity, and, to go further, to say this isn't just about you but about the harm you can do to others through transmission. But here's the thing. If government travels an autocratic, unprecedented route with the pandemic, what's going to happen to liberty generally and with other matters, such as climate change?

Keep in mind that President-elect Joe Biden has called climate change an "existential threat," meaning human existence is at risk. But while they do say climate change is going to demand some tough adjustments, there are scientists who disagree while they point to cautious steps and innovative ideas in the wings. We need to skip such extreme solutions as replacing fossil fuels with renewable fuels and saying goodbye to industrialism.

Of course, Biden and others, while giving voice to extreme worries, tell us that we will have a revived economy. That is nonsense, especially if people don't get it that it would at least take nuclear energy to replace fossil fuels without tragic mishap. Actually, there is nothing the United States can do in and of itself to halt climate change. It is a global issue, and what do we do about China, say, if it refuses to budge? Given the belief that humanity is at stake, would war be an option?

The truth is that some supposed remedies could be a bigger threat than climate change, and look at what we are doing in the pandemic. The total shutdowns of industry can cost millions of jobs, destroy businesses in vast numbers and, yes, kill people. A crunched economy will mean less education, less health care, more poverty, more misery. And what about New York where it had been OK for large numbers to go to liquor stores and later drink up but not go to churches and pray? The Supreme Court came down on the side of religious liberty.

At any rate, at least some experts argue, 99% of people who contract the virus are in no danger of death, and those who are, the elderly and those with underlying conditions, can be addressed as a special class needing special help and protection as others rebuild our economy. Schools are safe if opened correctly, and the information on how to do it is readily available. Keeping children out of schools can be a disaster for them, a rip in their education that may never be totally repaired. Digital instruction is simply not available for everyone and nowhere close to the efficacy of person-to-person instruction.

Scientists debate some of this, but we have been a free society, although yes, in emergencies we expect the government to intervene more than usual. It does not follow that anything goes or that overreach will be successful. An American instinct is for people to decide certain matters for themselves. It is actually more than an instinct, but a conviction that we have our rights. I do not hereby offer my respect to people who are careless, but neither do I believe Thanksgiving celebration is a matter of law enforcement with no implications for the future.

Amazon should do better by its workers

By RINA CUMMINGS
Tribune News Service

Rina Cummings works at the JFK8 Amazon facility on Staten Island. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive *magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

The first time I heard, in mid-September, that Jeff Bezos' wealth increased $70 billion since the start of the pandemic, I was just finishing an 11-hour shift.

"Maybe they could afford to give us face masks that reach our ears and don't fall apart the moment they're unwrapped," I thought.

When Amazon came to Staten Island in 2018, I leapt at the opportunity to work there. I even gave a speech at work where I said I hoped my son would grow up to be like Bezos.

Now I see more clearly how billionaire owners like Bezos can claim all the profits during the pandemic while frontline workers like me take all the risks.

When the pandemic started, Amazon was slow to respond. When I clocked in on March 29, there weren't any masks or social distancing protocols, even though we were selling masks by the pallet full. I could hear horror movie music in my head as I gazed at hundreds of unmasked workers.

I walked out that day. Amazon says I took a voluntary unpaid leave.

I've got a medical condition, and I'm caring for children and elders. I can't afford to get sick. I stood up and spoke out. I kept my job.

I returned to work in July. There were better systems in place: a temperature scan at the door, masks provided and required for everyone, and monitors to enforce safety rules. Amazon now staggers the beginning and end of shifts and breaks—but only by 15 minutes, so there's still crowding, especially when a shift ends.

On Oct. 1, Amazon announced that nearly 20,000 of its U.S. workers had been infected with COVID-19. That number is surely higher by now.

I run a flat sorter on the shipping dock, two big machines with a conveyor belt. I have to scan 1,800 packages an hour. That's thirty scans per minute and 18,000 per shift. The pace skyrocketed during the pandemic. I also must work alongside another person and it's impossible to stay six feet apart.

Many of my coworkers have gotten sick. One died from COVID-19. We get a text whenever someone in the plant tests positive, but we are not told who they are where they work. It's a big plant, and it's scary getting multiple texts each week. I've counted more than 200 texts since returning to work.

Since the start of the pandemic, Amazon has been on a hiring spree, further crowding the plant and the buses to work without plans to improve commuting conditions for our growing workforce. The company's fortunes are booming, as more people choose to shop without leaving their homes.

A new report from the Institute for Policy Studies, titled "Billionaire Wealth vs. Community Health," reveals that the combined wealth of 647 U.S. billionaires increased by almost $1 trillion since mid-March. Bezos' wealth increased by 62%, totaling $188.3 billion as of mid-November.

Amazon can afford to invest more to protect workers through measures like hazard pay, a dedicated express bus for commuting workers, sturdier masks, and a workplace council of frontline workers to advise the company on safety systems. And Amazon and other mega-corporations profiting from the pandemic should pay their fair share of taxes to fund public transportation and public health protections for employees.

I like my job. We're getting our customers the things they urgently need during the pandemic. But Amazon could do a lot better by its workers.

AMERICA

From Page 8

on goods and services.

Hometowns have seen the result of a lack of preparedness. Our region needs only to look to the demise of the steel industry in Pittsburgh to see the job loss, the flight of young people seeking gainful employment, the burden of a three-decade rebuild.

This 21st century Marshall Plan is a strategy that would help to construct a new energy infrastructure before what we have crumbles to ruin.

Those inside the Beltway must show they've got their finger on the pulse of the Heartland.

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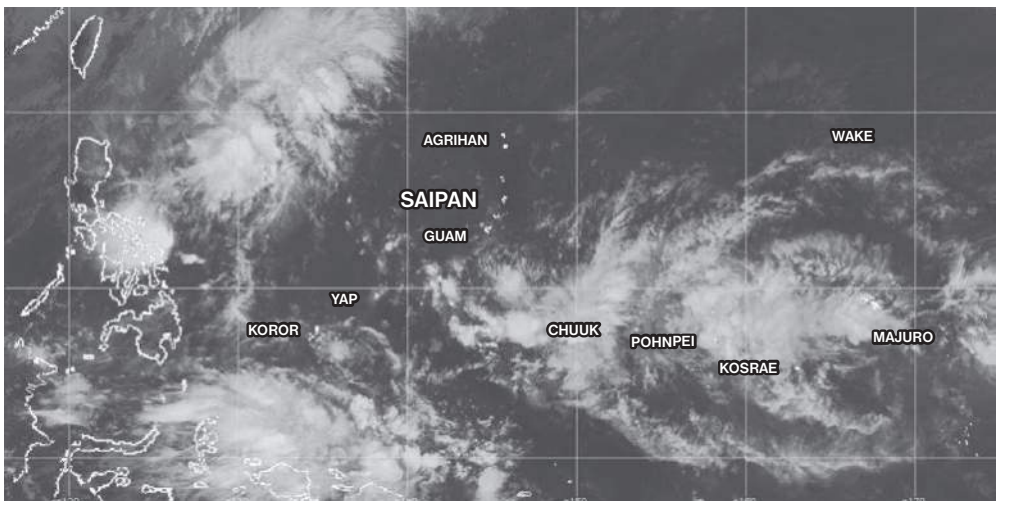
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy with numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:20 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Skies are mostly cloudy across the Marianas this morning, and satellite and radar are showing a few showers around the islands, mainly light to moderate with low cloud tops. Moderate to fresh trade winds are present, and seas are 6 to 8 feet at Ritidian and Tanapag buoys. East and southeast of the Marianas, satellite shows a large area of disturbed weather extending from about 300 miles southeast of Guam across Chuuk to Pohnpei.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:27 AM	5:45 PM
Thursday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Saturday	6:29 AM	5:45 PM
Sunday	6:30 AM	5:45 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	7:46 AM	7:15 PM
Thursday	-	8:40 AM	8:07 PM
Friday	-	9:32 AM	9:03 PM
Saturday	-	10:23 AM	9:59 PM
Sunday	-	11:11 AM	10:55 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	75° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 21°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 59°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 69°
London	Sunny	48° / 39°
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 53°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°
Melbourne	Rain	66° / 55°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 72°
New York	Mostly Sunny	52° / 44°
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	46° / 41°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	43° / 30°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	71° / 54°
San Francisco	Sunny	60° / 44°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	32° / 21°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 39°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	55° / 44°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
2:36 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.43
9:45 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.67
3:09 PM	LOW TIDE	1.08
7:46 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.61

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Furusato: Where everybody knows your name

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Like in the American sitcom *Cheers*, Furusato Japanese Restaurant has an affable owner who seems to know everyone who comes through the doors of the Paseo de Marianas establishment.

Hideaki Sawada first established Furusato 21 years ago in 1989 and has been a familiar fixture at the restaurant where he greets everyone—whether first-time or loyal customers—like he has known them for a long time.

Shuttered since March, Furusato finally reopened in mid-November, with Sawada and company now solely catering to the local market.

For more information or reservations, call 233-3333.

"We decided to open because everyone—all our customers—wanted us to reopen now. Like most businesses in Garapan, especially at Paseo de Marianas, our main target were tourists, but since we don't expect tourists back in the near future, we will focus exclusively on our local customers," said Sawada.

MARK RABAGO

Furusato Japanese Restaurant owner Hideaki Sawada with manager Nancy Florentino and staff Flordeliza Moscoso and Analiza Evangelista make customers right at home at the Paseo de Marianas establishment.

To celebrate its reopening, Furusato is offering a lunch special and a luxury lunch special from 11:30am to 2pm everyday except Sunday.

The $11 special lunch comes in two choices—Special Lunch Set A consists of Japanese-style curry rice and half shoyu ramen or half shio ramen. Special Lunch Set B is made up of zaru soba or zaru udon (cold soba or cold udon), mini ebi fry don (mini fried shrimp with egg on the rice), and miso soup.

The luxury special lunch has four variants. Set 1 is zaru soba or udon with tempura (udon tempura), two pieces of onigiri, miso soup, and pickles ($16). Set 2 is ankake ramen (soy sauce ramen with vegetable and flour), half fried rice, and three pieces of dumplings ($17). Set 3 is saikoro steak (dice steak with rice and pickles) and half shoyu ramen or half shio ramen ($18). Set 4 is kalbi don (short ribs on rice with Japanese sauce), half shoyu ramen or half shio ramen, and pickles ($18).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Furusato Japanese Restaurant's famous poki.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Furusato Japanese Restaurant's California roll.

Not feeling the special lunch or the luxury special lunch offerings? Furusato has got you covered; its original menu is still available. Just ask from their equally friendly waitstaff Flordeliza Moscoso and Analiza Evangelista.

"We're really targeting local customers by introducing a lot of sushi dishes in our new menu like California roll, spicy tuna roll, salmon roll, yellow fin tuna roll, etc. … For the tuna we always go to local fishermen. Others we still import them. We source our salmon from Alaska and yellowfin from abroad," said Sawada.

Like the bursting of the Japanese economic bubble in the late 1990s and the exit of Japanese Airlines in the mid-2000s, Sawada looks at the troubles brought by the COVID-19 pandemic as fleeting.

"Before, we had many Japanese tourists. They'll come in the morning and go to Managaha the whole day and at nighttime they come to Furasato because it reminds them of their 'hometown,' which is fitting because Furasato is Japanese for hometown," he said.

But the heyday of Japanese tourists arriving by the jetloads are now a distant memory and Sawada knows that. He quickly adjusted by pivoting to Korean and Chinese tourists and business gradually returned to his quaint little Japanese restaurant at the heart of Garapan. Which is why he and longtime manager Nancy Florentino are optimistic that, like other businesses on island, Furasato will bounce back.

Twenty-one years and counting, the word "hometown" has taken on a new meaning for Sawada. Saipan has truly become his second home, which is why he treats everyone who dines in his restaurant as family. And just like that, Furasato has truly become a place "where everybody knows your name."

Furusato is located at the Paseo de Marianas beside the I Love Saipan Sweets & Snacks Store. It is open for lunch from 11:30am to 2pm and dinner from 5:30pm to 8pm. For more information or reservations, call 233-3333.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Furusato Japanese Restaurant's spicy tuna roll.

Majesty Restaurant serves up 172 Thanksgiving meals

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Majesty Restaurant, in partnership with Marianas Medical Center and an anonymous benefactor, served 172 hot meals on Thanksgiving Day.

The spread included roast chicken, ham, rice, vegetables, bread, fruit, cake/pie, water, and a relief bag.

The food distribution was part of the restaurant's "Full Belly, Full Hearts" program, which aims to give out 1,000 meals to help the unemployed, reduced hours, low-income, homeless people impacted by COVID-19.

Majesty Restaurant and MMC would also like to thank Dan Dan Bakery for donating 100 pieces of dinner rolls; Bitoy's BBQ and Herman's Bakery for providing at-cost, discounted chicken and ham; Andreu Zhuk of Zhuk Corp. for providing discounted bananas; and donors from the Northern Marianas College for donating food items to include in the relief bags.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The free Thanksgiving Day meal Majesty Restaurant and Marianas Medical Center distributed included roast chicken, ham, rice, vegetables, bread, fruit, cake/pie, water, and a relief bag.

Aside from distributing hot meals on Thanksgiving, Majesty Restaurant and MMC also handed out meal vouchers to recipients who were unable to receive a Thanksgiving meal from the Salvation Army the day before. The Salvation Army provided 300 Thanksgiving meals.

Majesty Restaurant and MMC plan to do it all over again before Christmas Day

Since the Labor Day weekend, Majesty Restaurant and MMC's "Full Belly, Full Hearts" program have distributed close to 800 meals. No registration or ID is required to receive a free meal and a relief bag. Those needing food assistance can also email FoodBox.Majesty@gmail.com.

If you are interested in donating or co-sponsoring a distribution or delivering meals to the villages, email FoodBox.Majesty@gmail.com.

BankGuam Holding Company declares dividends

HAGATNA, Guam—BankGuam Holding Company (BKGMF) announced that its board of directors declared a quarterly cash dividend of $0.10 per share for the holders of its common stock and a dividend payment to the holders of the company's 5.5% Fixed Rate/Floating Rate Noncumulative Preferred Stock, Series A, at its board's regular meeting held on Monday, Nov. 23, 2020. The dividends will be paid on Dec. 31, 2020, to shareholders of record as of Dec. 15, 2020. ***(PR)***

Nation

Top secret: Biden gets access to President's Daily Brief

AP

In this Nov. 6, 2020, file photo then-Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden arrives with his running mate Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., to speak in Wilmington, Del. President-elect Biden turns 78 on Friday, Nov. 20.

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—Joe Biden on Monday got his first look as president-elect at the President's Daily Brief, a top secret summary of U.S. intelligence and world events—a document former first lady Michelle Obama has called "The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book."

Biden has already had eyes on different iterations of the so-called PDB, which is tailored to the way each president likes to absorb information.

More than a decade ago, Biden read President George W. Bush's PDB during Biden's transition into the vice presidency. After that, he read President Barack Obama's PDB for eight years. Now, after a four-year break, he's reading President Donald Trump's PDB.

"The briefers almost certainly will be asking Biden what he prefers in terms of format and style," said David Priess, author of "The President's Book of Secrets," a history of the PDB. "At a minimum, they're seeing what seems to resonate most with him so that when they make the book his book, they can tailor it to him."

Obama's PDB was a 10- to 15-page document tucked in a leather binder, which he found waiting for him on the breakfast table. Later in his presidency, he liked reading the ultra-secret intelligence brief on a secured iPad.

"Michelle called it "The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book," Obama wrote in his recently released book, "A Promised Land."

"On a given day, I might read about terrorist cells in Somalia or unrest in Iraq or the fact that the Chinese or Russians were developing new weapons systems," Obama wrote. "Nearly always, there was mention of potential terrorist plots, no matter how vague, thinly sourced, or unactionable—a form of due diligence on the part of the intelligence community, meant to avoid the kind of second-guessing that had transpired after 9/11."

From now until Inauguration Day, Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will be reading the PDB crafted for Trump, who had delayed giving Biden and Harris access to it as he contests the outcome of the election.

Trump, who prefers absorbing information in visual ways, likes short texts and graphics.

"Trump himself said during his campaign and during the transition in 2016 that he did not like reading long documents—that he preferred bullet points," said Priess, who has not seen any of Trump's PDBs. "It probably has charts, tables, graphs—things like that. Not the parody that people make that it's like a cartoon book ... but something that is more visual. But we don't know for sure."

The written brief, which Trump doesn't always read, often is followed by a verbal briefing with an intelligence official, although those oral briefings stopped at least for a time in October. Priess said he didn't know why they stopped or if they had resumed, but that they stopped at a time when Trump was spending much of his time on the campaign trail.

Before Trump authorized Biden to get the PDB as president-elect, Biden was given some intelligence background briefings as a candidate. But they were more general and did not include the nation's top secrets.

The other thing that a president-elect gets is a briefing "on CIA's covert actions," former acting CIA director Mike Morell said at an event hosted by the Center for Presidential Transition based in Washington. "It's important for the president-elect to get this briefing ... because on Inauguration Day, these covert actions will become the new president's."

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy read his first brief while sitting on the diving board of a swimming pool at his retreat in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. President Lyndon Johnson liked to read his brief in the afternoon. President Richard Nixon relied on his national security adviser Henry Kissinger to peruse the briefs and tell him what he thought the president should know.

As the laborious recount of ballots dragged on in 2000, President Bill Clinton decided that then-Gov. George W. Bush should get access to his PDB just in case he was the winner. Bush became was the first incoming president to read it before he was president-elect.

Americans face new COVID-19 restrictions after Thanksgiving

Americans returning from Thanksgiving break faced strict new coronavirus measures around the country Monday as health officials brace for a disastrous worsening of the nationwide surge because of holiday gatherings over the long weekend.

Los Angeles County imposed a stay-at-home order for its 10 million residents, and Santa Clara County, in the heart of Silicon Valley, banned high school, college and professional sports and decreed a quarantine for those who have traveled more than 150 miles outside the county.

In Hawaii, the mayor of Hawaii County said trans-Pacific travelers arriving without a negative COVID-19 test must quarantine for 14 days, and even those who have tested virus-free may be randomly selected for another test upon arrival. New Jersey is suspending all youth sports.

"The red flags are flying in terms of the trajectory in our projections of growth," said California Gov. Gavin Newsom. "If these trends continue, we're going to have to take much more dramatic, arguably drastic, action."

Health experts had pleaded with Americans to stay home over Thanksgiving and not gather with anyone who didn't live with them. Nevertheless, almost 1.2 million people passed through U.S. airports Sunday, the most since the pandemic gripped the country in March, and others took to the highways to be with family and friends.

Now they're being urged to watch for any signs of illness and get tested right away if they experience symptoms.

Some families are already seeing the fallout from Thanksgiving gatherings.

Jonathan Eshnaur lugged his 32-inch TV to a Thanksgiving Day family gathering at his sister's home in Olathe, Kansas, so he could watch football outside. He wore a mask and only went into her house for the prayer and to use the bathroom.

His father began feeling terrible that day and tested positive the next. His mother now is showing symptoms, and six others were exposed.

"I think we all have a tendency to think it won't happen to me," said Eshnaur, a 34-year-old special education teacher. "But that is kind of the issue with these kinds of viruses is it does happen, especially when we have widespread community spread that is going on."

Priya Patel, 24, is isolating at her parents' home in San Antonio after visiting friends over the weekend and coming down with a sore throat.

GAO says weekly unemployment benefits report flawed

WASHINGTON (AP)—A government watchdog has found that the Labor Department's widely watched weekly unemployment benefits data are providing an inaccurate reading on the number of newly laid off workers because of flaws in the government's data collection.

The Government Accountability Office said in a report Monday that the Labor Department's weekly report of the number of people filing new applications for unemployment benefits and those receiving continuing claims contained a number of inaccuracies.

The GAO said the problems in data collection and reporting were making it hard for policymakers to get a reliable picture of what unemployment was doing during the pandemic. The report said the weekly data included overestimates and at other times underestimates of the number of people filing for unemployment benefits.

GAO said the problem arose because the Labor Department was using the number of people filing for claims in each state as a proxy for the number of people claiming benefits nationwide. However, this has resulted in inaccurate counts because of large backlogs in processing historic levels of claims and other data collection problems.

"Without an accurate accounting of the number of individuals who are relying on these benefits in as close to real time as possible, policymakers may be challenged to respond to the crisis at hand," the GAO said in its report.

GAO recommended that the Labor Department revise its weekly news releases to clarify that the numbers in the reports are not an accurate estimate of the number of individuals claiming benefits.

The GAO also recommended that the department pursue other means to get more accurate readings on benefit applications such as using data collected by the states.

The GAO report said that the Labor Department had agreed to make revisions to its weekly news releases and agreed to pursue options for obtaining more accurate data from the states. But the Labor Department balked at a recommendation that it seek state data going back to January 2020, contending that collecting back data would put too much of a burden on already strained state unemployment offices.

In response to the pandemic which triggered shutdowns and the loss of millions of jobs, Congress provided support through three programs. It boosted relief through the regular jobless program by $600 weekly to provide more support. It also extended this relief from the usual 26 weeks to 39 weeks and it also created a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program which provided benefits to gig-economy workers and the self-employed.

Asia

8 dead in pandemic unrest at Sri Lanka prison

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Inmates unhappy about the coronavirus threat at an overcrowded prison near Sri Lanka's capital have clashed with guards who opened fire, leaving eight prisoners dead and 59 others injured, officials said Monday. Two guards were critically injured, they said.

Pandemic-related unrest has been growing in the country's prisons. Inmates have staged protests in recent weeks at several prisons as the number of coronavirus cases surges in the facilities.

More than a thousand inmates in five prisons have tested positive for the coronavirus and at least two have died. About 50 prison guards have also tested positive.

Senaka Perera, a lawyer with the Committee for Protecting Rights of Prisoners, said the inmates at Mahara prison near Colombo had been frustrated because their pleas for coronavirus testing and separation of infected prisoners had been ignored by officials for more than a month.

Sri Lanka has experienced an upsurge in coronavirus cases since last month when two clusters—one centered at a garment factory and other at a fish market—emerged in Colombo and its suburbs.

Confirmed cases from the two clusters have reached 19,449. Sri Lanka has reported a total number of 22,988 coronavirus cases, including 109 fatalities.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ Hong Kong has imposed sweeping curbs to stop a fresh spike in coronavirus infections, closing government offices and swimming pools and limiting public gatherings to two people. The announcement follows a decision to close schools for in-person teaching the rest of the year. The territory's leader, Chief Executive Carrie Lam, announced 76 new confirmed cases. That was on top of 115 infections reported Sunday. Lam said the upsurge is "very severe." Lam said government employees, except those in emergency services, would work from home. She said private employers were asked to do so as well if they could.

■ Cambodia's Education Ministry is ordering all schools to close after a rare local outbreak of the coronavirus. It says public schools will remain shut until until Jan. 11, the start of the next school year, while private schools must close for two weeks. Officials said over the weekend that a family of six and another man tested positive for the coronavirus. Eight more cases were reported Monday among residents of Phnom Penh who were in contact with the family. Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed concern that the woman believed to be the source of the outbreak had traveled extensively in the country. About 3,300 people in seven provinces who were found to have had contact with the family are having themselves tested, the ministry said. Also on Monday, the Culture and Fine Arts Ministry announced the closure of all theaters and museums and the prohibition of public concerts for the next two weeks.

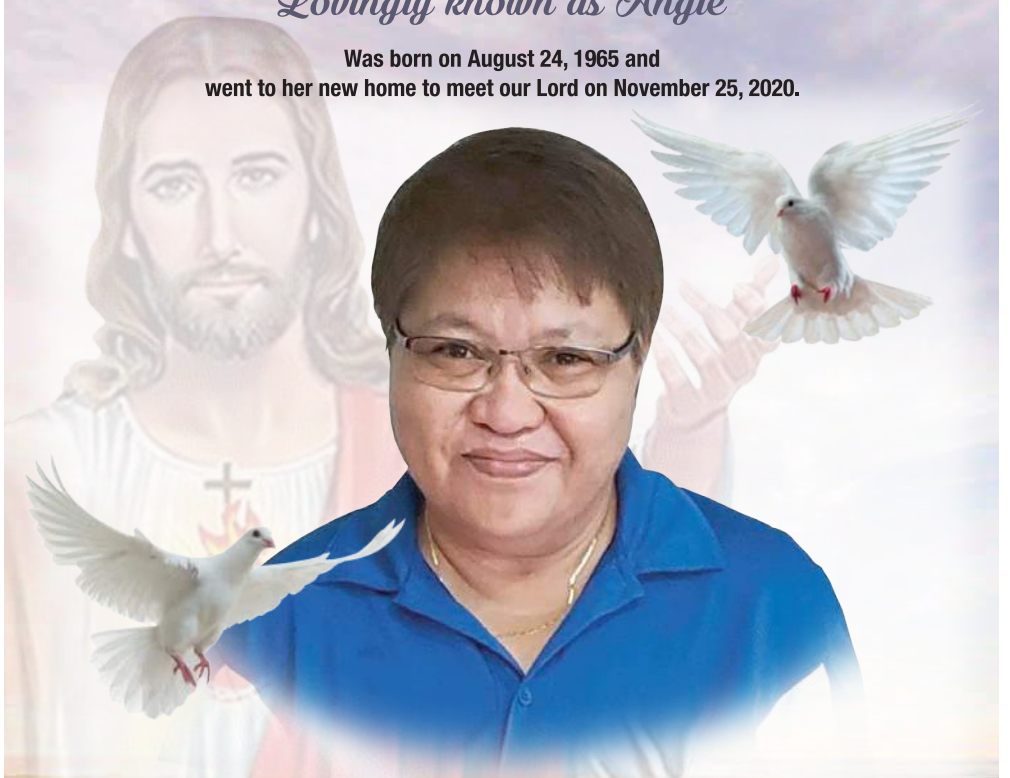
■ India has recorded 38,772 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, driving its overall total to 9.43 million. The Health Ministry on Monday also reported 443 deaths in the same period, raising the death toll to 137,139. India continues to have one of the lowest deaths per million population globally, the ministry said in a statement. For more than three weeks now India's single-day cases have remained below the 50,000 mark. The capital, New Delhi, has also seen a dip in daily infections. It reported fewer than 5,000 new cases for the second consecutive day. On Sunday, it recorded 68 deaths, driving the capital's total to 9,066. India is second behind the U.S. in total reported coronavirus cases. In an effort to slow the virus's spread, the home ministry has allowed states to impose local restrictions such as night curfews but has asked them to consult before imposing lockdowns at state, district or city levels.

DEATH & FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

†Angelina Ancheta Toto

Lovingly known as Angie

Was born on August 24, 1965 and
went to her new home to meet our Lord on November 25, 2020.



In her new life, Angelina A. Toto will be reunited with her:
Father: †Nicasio Toto
Mother: †Trinidad Toto
Sister: †Marilyn Toto
Sister-in-Law: †Flordeliza Toto

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her
Siblings: **Fulgencio Toto**/Zenaida Toto (Rona Rowena Toto)
Albert Toto (Ma. Criselda/Nino Emilio, Ma. Carmela/Roldan Nolasco, Euliza Dominique Nolasco, and Ma. Cassandra Toto
Lilia Toto Canadalla/Benito Canadalla (Ben Kristoffer, Ana Marie Cruz, CK, Kean, Jan Benedict, Jhoanna, and Jana)
Nenita Toto delos Santos/Rolando delos Santos (Kraiganne, Mizel Miguelo, Keshia Marie Maiate/Renan Maiate, Kauai, and Jasper Jacob delos Santos)
(Jericho Toto/Mary Grace Gomez, Angelo Toto)

Bhiya Canadalla

She will also be greatly missed by her relatives, co-workers, bosses and friends.

Daily mass is being offered at 6 a.m. at the Mt. Carmel Church and the rosary at 6:00 p.m. at Alpex compound, San Antonio until Friday, December 4, 2020.
Your thoughts and prayers are sincerely appreciated.

Thank you very much, Salamat po.

The Family

DEATH & FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

†Warren Lanzanas Villegas

July 24, 1962 – November 20, 2020

In his new life he now joins his
Father: Levy Nicolas C. Villegas
Mother: Julieta L. Villegas
Niece: Maria Lourdes V. Bautista
Nephew: Dustin D.P. Villegas

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:
Wife: Marylou N. Villegas

Children & Spouses
Christian Dior L. Villegas
Kim Dickenson & Rodney Dickenson
Aemir N. Villegas & Irene Anderson
Kershey V. Seman & Vincent Seman

Grandchildren:
Tianna Jo V. Magday, Zayden Amir A Villegas, Zhion Amare A. Villegas & Juliet Irie A. Villegas

Siblings & Family:
Leah Villegas & Romel Besmonte
Malou & Arnel Bautista
Jenalyn Villegas
Joel & Cora Villegas
Haydn & Ana Maria Villegas
Nicolevy & Catherine Villegas
Errol Villegas
Diane Villegas & Vincent Mettao
Lani Bautista

Nieces & Nephews:
Rowell Besmonte, Mark Rodel Besmonte, Jay Jeward Besmonte, Nicca Leimel Besmonte, Rene Bautista, Emmanuel James Bautista, Nathan Daniel Bautista, Herschel Joseph, Gwen Joseph, Daylinne Joseph, Ervin Clyde Villegas, Sidney Villegas, Ryvan Villegas, Justin Villegas, Alyssa Guevarra, Haidie Marie Villegas, Keesha Villegas, Nicole Villegas, Brian Villegas, Anthony Villegas, Vianny Mettao, Jerome Mettao, Connie Mettao, Eleazir Mettao, Julianne Mettao, Vincent Mettao Jr., Ina Mettao, Tanu Mettao, Abbie Jane Battung, Mikko Battung

As well as numerous great nieces and nephews

Nightly rosaries are said at the family's residence in Tamuning, Guam. Last respects and final viewing will be held from 9:00am-11:00am Friday December 11, 2020. Cremation services to follow at Ada's Mortuary in Sinajana, Guam.

Live stream will be available on the Ada's Mortuary website

The Family

World

Iran: Israel killed military nuclear scientist remotely

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—A top Iranian security official on Monday accused Israel of using "electronic devices" to remotely kill a scientist who founded the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program in the 2000s.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the country's Supreme National Security Council, made the comment at the funeral for Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, where Iran's defense minister separately vowed to continue the man's work "with more speed and more power."

Israel, long suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over the last decade, has repeatedly declined to comment on the attack.

Fakhrizadeh headed Iran's so-called AMAD program, which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that "structured program" ended in 2003. U.S. intelligence agencies concurred with that assessment in a 2007 report.

Israel insists Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons, pointing to Tehran's ballistic missile program and research into other technologies. Iran long has maintained that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Shamkhani's remarks drastically change the story of Fakhrizadeh's killing, which took place Friday. Authorities initially said a truck exploded and then gunmen opened fire on the scientist, killing him and a bodyguard. State TV even interviewed a man the night of the attack who described seeing gunmen open fire.

State TV's English-language broadcaster Press TV reported earlier Monday that a weapon recovered from the scene of the attack bore "the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry." State TV's Arabic-language channel, Al-Alam, claimed the weapons used were "controlled by satellite," a claim also made Sunday by the semiofficial Fars news agency.

None of the outlets immediately offered evidence supporting their claims, which also give authorities a way to explain why no one was reportedly arrested at the scene.

"Unfortunately, the operation was a very complicated operation and was carried out by using electronic devices," Shamkhani told state TV. "No individual was present at the site."

Satellite control of weapons is nothing new. Armed, long-range drones, for instance, rely on satellite connections to be controlled by their remote pilots. Remote-controlled gun turrets also exist, but typically see their operator connected by a hard line to cut down on the delay in commands being relayed. Israel uses such hard-wired systems along the border with the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

While technically feasible, it wasn't immediately clear if such a system had been used before, said Jeremy Binnie, the Mideast editor of Jane's Defence Weekly.

"Could you set up a weapon with a camera which then has a feed that uses an open satellite communications line back to the controller?" Binnie said. "I can't see why that's not possible."

It also raised the question whether the truck that exploded during the attack detonated afterward to try to destroy a satellite-controlled machine gun that was hidden inside the vehicle. Iranian officials did not immediately acknowledge that. It also would require someone on the ground to set up the weapon.

Shamkhani blamed the Iranian exile group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq as well for "having a role in this," without elaborating. The MEK, as the exile group is known, has been suspected of assisting Israeli operations in Iran in the past. Shahin Gobadi, an MEK spokesman, dismissed Shamkhani's remarks as "rage, rancor and lies" sparked by the group's earlier exposes over Iran's nuclear program.

Monday's service for Fakhrizadeh took place at an outdoor portion of Iran's Defense Ministry in Tehran, with officials including Revolutionary Guard chief Gen. Hossein Salami, the Guard's Quds Force leader Gen. Esmail Ghaani, civilian nuclear program chief Ali Akbar Sahei and Intelligence Minister Mamoud Alavi.

Uproar in France over proposed limits on filming police

PARIS (AP)—French activists fear that a proposed new security law will deprive them of a potent weapon against abuse—cellphone videos of police activity—threatening their efforts to document possible cases of police brutality, especially in impoverished immigrant neighborhoods.

French President Emmanuel Macron's government is pushing a new security bill that makes it illegal to publish images of police officers with intent to cause them harm, amid other measures. Critics fear the new law could hurt press freedoms and make it more difficult for all citizens to report on police brutality.

"I was lucky enough to have videos that protect me," said Michel Zecler, a Black music producer who was beaten up recently by several French police officers. Videos first published Thursday by French website Loopsider have been seen by over 14 million viewers, resulting in widespread outrage over police actions.

Two of the officers are in jail while they are investigated while two others, also under investigation, are out on bail.

The draft bill, still being debated in parliament, has prompted protests across the country called by press freedom advocates and civil rights campaigners. Tens of thousands of people marched Saturday in Paris to reject the measure, including families and friends of people killed by police.

"For decades, descendants of post-colonial immigration and residents in populous neighborhoods have denounced police brutality," Sihame Assbague, an anti-racism activist, told The Associated Press.

Videos by the public have helped to show a wider audience that there is a "systemic problem with French police forces, who are abusing, punching, beating, mutilating, killing," she said.

Activists say the bill may have an even greater impact on people other than journalists, especially those of immigrant origin living in neighborhoods where relationships with the police have long been tense. Images posted online have been key to denouncing cases of officers' misconduct and racism in recent years, they argue.

Assbague expressed fears that, under the proposed law, those who post videos of police abuses online may be put on trial, where they would face up to a year in jail and a 45,000-euro ($53,000) fine.

"I tend to believe that a young Arab man from a poor suburb who posts a video of police brutality in his neighborhood will be more at risk of being found guilty than a journalist who did a video during a protest," she said.

Amal Bentounsi's brother, Amine, was shot in the back and killed by a police officer in 2012. The officer was sentenced to a five-year suspended prison sentence. Along with other families of victims, in March she launched a mobile phone app called Emergency-Police Violence to record abuses and bring cases to court.

Good Housekeeping

This DIY candle making kit from Revival Homestead Supply provides all the materials you'll need to make three personalized lavender candles for your friends and family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Here's what you need to make awesome DIY gifts on a budget

By HANNAH HERRERA GREENSPAN
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

This year has, without a doubt, thrown us a few curveballs, and the holidays will be no different. Why not give your friends and family members homemade presents? Whether you are looking to save a few bucks, in need of something to do while at home or procrastinating on purchasing presents, check out this guide to products and kits for making your own one-of-a-kind gifts.

Cullen Aesthetic scrunchie-making kit

Put together a homemade scrunchie for your favorite VSCO girl or the '90s enthusiast in your life. This scrunchie-making kit from The Cullen Aesthetic has all the materials you'll need to crochet four velvet scrunchies. $30, etsy.com

Revival candle-making kit

Who doesn't love candles? This DIY candle making kit from Revival Homestead Supply provides all the materials you'll need to make three personalized lavender candles for your friends and family. $38, uncommongoods.com

Yarn Needles and Thread beginners knitting kit

If you want to knit gifts this year but don't know how, Yarn Needles and Thread's beginners knitting kit includes an online knitting tutorial, four yarns and a set of bamboo knitting needles. $32.10, etsy.com

Grow and Make hot sauce-making kit

Let your loved ones enjoy some heat with this hot sauce kit from Grow and Make. The kit comes with all of the ingredients to make three bottles of hot sauce. $39.95, shop.growandmake.com

Grow and Make chocolate truffle-making kit

Chocolate is essential during the holidays, especially in 2020. Treat your loved ones like royalty by making some delectable truffles with Uncommon Goods' kit and without all the equipment and mess of tempering chocolate. What a win-win! $35, uncommongoods.com

Bath bombs from Dazzling Daisies organza bags and Aveda essential oils

Pamper your loved ones this holiday season by making easy bath bombs. Simply fill these organza drawstring bags with Epsom salts, dried flowers from Amazon, and citrus zest or essential oils from Aveda to create luxurious baths. Plus, the organza bags can be reused by the recipients to make their own bath bombs in the future! $4.25, dazzlingdaisies.com

2 Fun Guys shiitake mushroom log kit

Help your loved ones easily grow their own organic mushrooms on this mess-free log kit from 2 Fun Guys USA. The kit comes with a hand-cut log that the company says will turn out a crop of Shiitake mushrooms every two to three months for up to three years. $29.95, williams-sonoma.com

The Cookie Cutter Shop 13-piece mini Christmas cookie cutter set

Give the classic gift of Christmas cookies this year. This timeless 13-piece mini cookie cutter set from The Cookie Cutter Shop includes all the holiday favorites, including a snowflake, angel, snowman and tree. $10.95, etsy.com

Uncommon Goods DIY tie dye kit

Tie dye isn't just for the summer, and you can make a wide range of gifts with Uncommon Goods' kit. Tie dye something classic like white T-shirts, or try a thin cloth for a tapestry or a plain tote bag. $14.99, uncommongoods.com

Sea of Bliss Shop DIY planter kit

In case you want to give your loved ones a gift they can DIY, this planter kit from Sea of Bliss Shop is perfect for your favorite Pinterester or anyone looking to cut down on screen time. The kit comes with an upcycled container, an air plant, washi tape, decorative paper, moss, brush, glue, instructions and plant care tips. $28, etsy.com

'Homemade' brownies with Mason jars from Michaels

If you want to spread holiday cheer through sweets without actually having to bake, give your friends and family members "homemade" brownies by putting the dry ingredients from your favorite recipe into Mason jars. For extra holiday cheer, decorate the Mason jars with ribbons, pipe cleaners, washi tape or paint. Michaels sells a pack of 12 Mason jars for 10 bucks. $9.99, michaels.com

Michaels white cards and envelopes

Step up your holiday card game by making your own. With this Michaels set of a dozen blank cards, all you'll need are watercolors, paint, colored pencils, gel pens, markers, oil pastels or crayons to express yourself. $7.99, michaels.com

Life & Style

Merriam-Webster's top word of 2020 not a shocker: pandemic

NEW YORK (AP)—If you were to choose a word that rose above most in 2020, which word would it be?

Ding, ding, ding: Merriam-Webster on Monday announced "pandemic" as its 2020 word of the year.

"That probably isn't a big shock," Peter Sokolowski, editor at large for Merriam-Webster, told The Associated Press.

"Often the big news story has a technical word that's associated with it and in this case, the word pandemic is not just technical but has become general. It's probably the word by which we'll refer to this period in the future," he said.

The word took on urgent specificity in March, when the coronavirus crisis was designated a pandemic, but it started to trend up on Merriam-Webster.com as early January and again in February when the first U.S. deaths and outbreaks on cruise ships occurred.

On March 11, when the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked hugely. Site interest for the word has remained significantly high through the year, Sokolowski said.

By huge, Sokolowski means searches for pandemic on March 11 were 115,806% higher than lookups experienced on the same date last year.

Pandemic, with roots in Latin and Greek, is a combination of "pan," for all, and "demos," for people or population. The latter is the same root of "democracy," Sokolowski noted. The word pandemic dates to the mid-1600s, used broadly for "universal" and more specifically to disease in a medical text in the 1660s, he said.

That was after the plagues of the Middle Ages, Sokolowski said.

He attributes the lookup traffic for pandemic not entirely to searchers who didn't know what it meant but also to those on the hunt for more detail, or for inspiration or comfort.

"We see that the word love is looked up around Valentine's Day and the word cornucopia is looked up at Thanksgiving," Sokolowski said. "We see a word like surreal spiking when a moment of national tragedy or shock occurs. It's the idea of dictionaries being the beginning of putting your thoughts in order."

Merriam-Webster acted quickly in March to add and update entries on its site for words related to the pandemic. While "coronavirus" had been in the dictionary for decades, "COVID-19" was coined in February. Thirty-four days later, Merriam-Webster had it up online, along with a couple dozen other entries that were revised to reflect the health emergency.

"That's the shortest period of time we've ever seen a word go from coinage to entry," Sokolowski said. "The word had this urgency."

Coronavirus was among runners up for word of the year as it jumped into the mainstream. Quarantine, asymptomatic, mamba, kraken, defund, antebellum, irregardless, icon, schadenfreude and malarkey were also runners up based on lookup spikes around specific events.

Particularly interesting to word nerds like Sokolowski, a lexicographer, is quarantine. With Italian roots, it was used during the Black Death of the 1300s for the period of time a new ship coming into port would have to wait outside a city to prevent disease. The "quar" in quarantine derives from 40, for the 40 days required.

Spikes for mamba occurred after the January death of Kobe Bryant, whose nickname was the Black Mamba. A mass of lookups occurred for kraken in July after Seattle's new National Hockey League franchise chose the mythical sea monster as its name, urged along by fans.

Fact or fiction? UK govt says 'The Crown' should be clear

LONDON (AP)—Britain's culture minister thinks the Netflix TV series "The Crown" should come with a disclaimer: It's a work of fiction.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden weighed in amid criticism of the historical liberties taken by the drama about the British royal family.

"It's a beautifully produced work of fiction. So as with other TV productions, Netflix should be very clear at the beginning it is just that," Dowden told the Mail on Sunday newspaper. "Without this, I fear a generation of viewers who did not live through these events may mistake fiction for fact."

Dowden is expected to write to Netflix this week to express his view. Netflix did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Questions of historical fidelity were not a major issue during earlier seasons of the show, which debuted in 2016 and traces the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II, which began in 1952.

But the current fourth season is set in the 1980s, a divisive decade that many Britons remember vividly. Characters include Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whose 11-year tenure transformed and divided Britain, and the late Princess Diana, whose death in a car crash in 1997 traumatized the nation.

Former royal press secretary Dickie Arbiter has called the series a "hatchet job" on Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, and his first wife Diana. The troubled relationship of the couple, played by Josh O'Connor and Emma Corrin, is a major storyline in the series.

Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, has also said the show should carry a notice that "this isn't true but it is based around some real events."

"I worry people do think that this is gospel and that's unfair," he told broadcaster ITV.

Some Conservatives have criticized the program's depiction of Thatcher, played by Gillian Anderson. Britain's first female prime minister, who died in 2013, is portrayed as clashing with Olivia Colman's Elizabeth to an extent that some say is exaggerated.

"The Crown" creator Peter Morgan, whose work also includes recent-history dramas "The Queen" and "Frost/Nixon," has defended his work, saying it is thoroughly researched and true in spirit.

In a 2017 discussion of "The Crown," Morgan said "you sometimes have to forsake accuracy, but you must never forsake truth."

Steven Fielding, a professor of political history at the University of Nottingham, said the suggestion that "The Crown" carry a disclaimer was "reasonable and yet pointless."

"It invariably doesn't have an effect," he said.

Rita Ora says sorry for lockdown-breaching birthday party

LONDON (AP)—British singer Rita Ora apologized Monday for breaking lockdown rules by holding a birthday party, saying it was "a serious and inexcusable error of judgment."

The Sun newspaper ran photos of Ora and others, including models Cara and Poppy Delevingne, arriving at the Casa Cruz restaurant in London's Notting Hill area on Saturday.

Under lockdown rules that end Wednesday, all pubs and restaurants in England must close except for takeout and delivery, and people are barred from meeting indoors with members of other households.

Ora said on Instagram that she had held "a small gathering with some friends to celebrate my 30th birthday."

"It was a spur of the moment decision made with the misguided view that we were coming out of lockdown and this would be OK," she wrote.

Ora, whose hits include "Anywhere" and "I Will Never Let You Down," said she now realized "how irresponsible these actions were and I take full responsibility."

Reports of the party attracted widespread criticism.

Asked about the event, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman, Jamie Davies, said it was "important that everybody in society sets an example by following the rules. That is for every member of the public, including celebrities."(backslash)

Britain has Europe's worst coronavirus death toll, at over 58,000 people.

Trust issues are remnants of past toxic relationships

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: Marriage is considered to be imperative in my religion and culture. I'm 29 and still not married. I have commitment and trust issues with guys. I have been in only three relationships my entire life.

Every time things are going well, I tend to self-sabotage and make excuses to push the guy away. I start arguments for no reason or create problems or issues that I fabricate out of thin air. I think it has a lot to do with the fact that my past relationships were toxic and tumultuous. They were cheaters and liars.

I have carried that baggage into my relationship with my new partner by not believing a lot of the things he says. For example, I doubt his feelings for me. When things are going smoothly between us, I always take five or 10 steps back. It isn't fair that I put him through the wringer, but I don't know any other way. How can I get past this continuous issue?

PROBLEM TRUSTING IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR PROBLEM TRUSTING: The most effective way to do that would be to talk about this destructive pattern with a licensed mental health adviser. If you do, it may help you rid yourself of the "baggage" you are carrying, understand why you chose the men you did before, and make it easier to evaluate any new relationships that start to develop.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have known my friend "Matt" for more than 20 years. We've been close for most of those years.

Matt is gay, and early in our friendship, we had a mutual friend, "Gary," who used a gay epithet often, even though he knew Matt is gay. It hurt Matt, but he wasn't comfortable speaking to Gary about it, so I did. Gary not only apologized to Matt but to this day (some 18 years later), I haven't heard Gary say that word in our company.

Recently, Matt has started using the N-word. I have told him that not only is it disgusting and offensive, but I compared it to the situation with Gary. Matt laughed it off and continues to use the word with no regard for me. I have started spending less time with him because of it because I don't want him to think I condone his racist language. Is it time to sever ties with Matt?

DISAPPOINTED IN MARYLAND

DEAR DISAPPOINTED: I think so. The next time Matt uses the N-word, make clear to him that if you ever hear it from him again, your friendship will be OVER. And then follow through.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I feel horrible about my "first time." It was with my boyfriend, and it happened in the back seat of his car. I had always dreamed of my first time being special, but after realizing we didn't have many options, we decided the car was fine. Now I feel ashamed and guilty. Can you advise me?

NOT LIKE I IMAGINED IN TEXAS

DEAR NOT: I will try. When did your first time happen? Last weekend? Last month? Last year? Whenever it was, it is in the past. Experience teaches us what works for us and what doesn't. Learn from it, but don't preoccupy yourself with regret over something you can't change.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

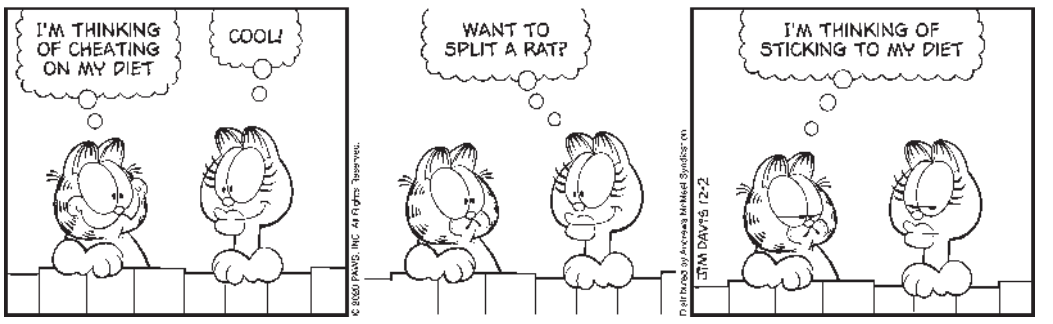
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WANT TO HEAR A JOKE I MADE UP?
SURE!
WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU CROSS A CANTALOUPE WITH LASSIE?
I GIVE UP.
A MELON-COLLIE BABY! GET IT??
AH HA HA HA HA HA! OH! OH! HAA HA HA!
HE JUST DOESN'T WANT TO FACE UP TO THE FACT THAT I'LL BE THE LIFE OF EVERY PARTY.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



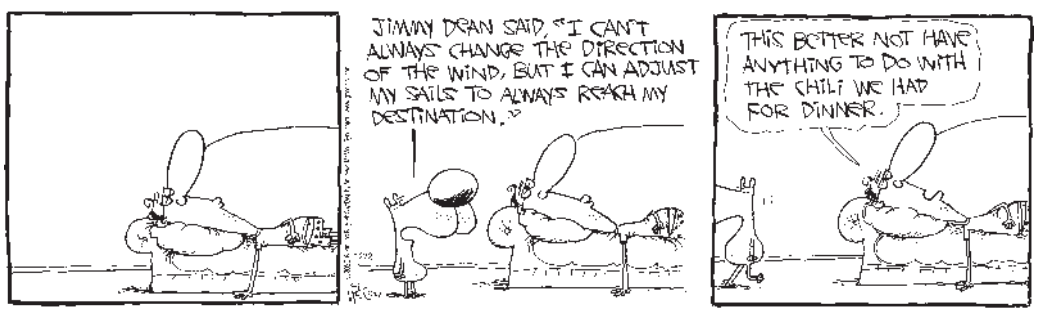
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SOAKING SOME CLOTH MASKS IN COFFEE.
IT'S MY NEW IDEA. COFFEE-INFUSED MASKS.
THEN I'LL SPRINKLE SOME OF THIS 100% PURE CAFFEINE POWDER ON THE INSIDE FOR AN EXTRA KICK.
I CAN SEE NO POSSIBLE WAY THIS COULD GO SIDEWAYS.
RIGHT? I WONDER IF I SHOULD TASTE-TEST THE POWDER.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


JIMMY DEAN SAID, "I CAN'T ALWAYS CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF THE WIND, BUT I CAN ADJUST MY SAILS TO ALWAYS REACH MY DESTINATION."
THIS BETTER NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE CHILI WE HAD FOR DINNER.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Halloween greeting
4 Roman 52
7 Honker
8 — blanche
10 Beetle Bailey's boss
11 Black Sea port
13 "Unacceptable!"
16 German article
17 Lauder of cosmetics
18 Sweetie
19 Geese formations
20 Antitoxins
21 Plumber's tool
23 "— bleu!"
25 Bell sound
26 Leslie Caron role
27 Cash dispenser
28 Humiliate
30 Motorist's org.
33 "Oh, and also ..."
36 Fall guy
37 Blood giver
38 Hot and sticky
39 Villain in "Wonder Woman"
40 Light brown
41 Witnessed

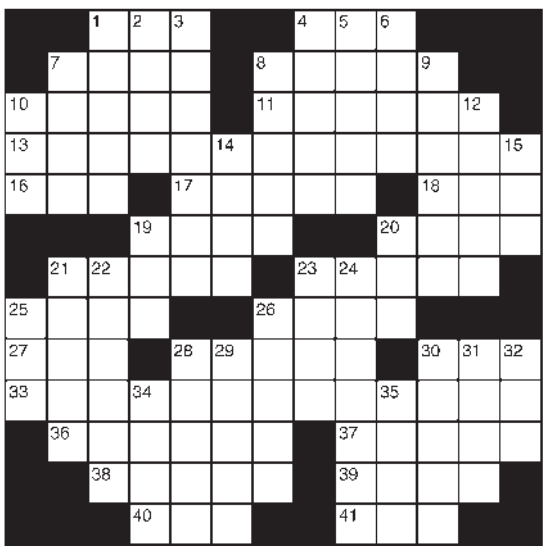
DOWN

1 Tennis star Becker
2 PTA and NEA, e.g.
3 Seven days
4 Soup server
5 Cara or Castle
6 "You never had — good!"
7 "Funny!"
8 Young horses
9 Old Testament book
10 Norm (Abbr.)
12 Worship
14 "Got it"
15 Stop — dime
19 Batman portrayer Kilmer
20 Biol. or chem.
21 Rogen and Green
22 "Broadway Joe"
23 Spanish ayes
24 Programs
25 Bit of butter
26 Played at a casino
28 Bakery lure
29 Commence
30 Good — (fixed)
31 Singer Tori
32 — Lingus
34 Track tipster
35 Nickelodeon's "Explorer"

Solution time: 23 mins.

A	P	B	S		I	O	S		C	L	A	P		
S	O	A	P		N	N	E		H	E	I	R		
O	K	R	A		C	A	N	A	N	D	O			
C	A	R	A	B			C	L	S	C	S			
			S	I	A		M	A	E					
A	B	N	E	R		F	E	R	T	I	L	E		
L	E	O			D	U	N			S	O	T		
C	A	M	I	U	M		A	M	P	L	C			
			A	S	H		P	F	A					
A	F	I	R	E		F	E	R	M	E	N	T		
F	E	A	R	E	T	E	D		M	I	C	E		
A	T	M	E		B	E	A		A	R	I	D		
A	C	A	D		A	L	L		L	C	S	S		

Yesterday's answer 12-2



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Aaron Rodgers, 37; Britney Spears, 39; Monica Seles, 47; Rena Sofer, 52.

Happy Birthday: Carefully choose who you associate with. Align yourself with people who feel as passionate as you do about your beliefs and goals. Look for alternative ways to protect against illness and injury. Be part of the solution, not the problem, and you will accomplish what you set out to do. Adjustments at home will encourage better relationships with loved ones. Your numbers are 7, 12, 22, 29, 34, 38, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Address pending issues, and proceed with your plans. Initiate a move or lifestyle change. Pool your funds with someone you love, and you will reach a common goal. Speak up and close the gap between uncertainty and positive change. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* The changes you make may not line up with what others want. Don't be afraid to go it alone if you can't convince others to get involved in your plans. Once you get things up and running, support will come your way. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Balance and integrity will matter when dealing with partnerships. Speak the truth, and you will avoid a misunderstanding. A promise someone makes is likely to be broken. Have a backup plan in place when dealing with others. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Be creative, innovative and willing to do things differently, and accomplishments will follow. Reach out to someone from your past who can influence your life or inspire you to resurrect an old idea you still want to pursue. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* How you deal with others will determine how much you accomplish. Channel energy into work, and challenge yourself to go above and beyond the call of duty to reach your goal. Action will lead to positive results. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Be careful how you handle the people with whom you live or work. Emotions will be close to the surface and cause an untimely turn of events if someone is upset. Listen, and make changes based on facts. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Aim to make progress. Refuse to let uncertainty take over or allow someone to push you down a questionable path. Less talk and more action will help you reach your goal. An unexpected financial, health or legal matter will take you by surprise. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* A change to where or how you live looks inviting. Consider how you can use your skills to improve your position. Get involved in a conversation with someone heading down a similar path. A joint venture is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take charge of what's going on around you. If you give in to someone's persuasive tactics, you will lose sight of what matters to you. Stay strong, be safe and do what's best for you. Home improvements are favored. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Change begins with you. Size up your situation at work and home, and consider how you can improve your life and relationships. Concentrate on diet, fitness and maintaining good health, and it will lead to a unique opportunity. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Speak up and take action. A chance to improve your position or status looks promising. Check out job opportunities and educational pursuits that will encourage a better lifestyle. Don't take a risk with your health or physical well-being. Fact-checking will make a difference. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Take care of matters personally. Someone will lead you down the wrong path if you are insecure or think someone knows more than you. Do your research, and follow what feels right. A commitment will improve your life. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are persistent, entertaining and competitive. You are convincing and charismatic.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

					6	8		
				7			2	
				5			9	1
	5	9			4	3		
6 2			9	1	7		4 1	
	1						8	
		5	1	6	9	7		
			7		5			

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/02

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	4	6	5	1	3	7	8	9
7	5	8	6	9	4	3	1	2
9	1	3	2	8	7	4	6	5
4	3	9	1	7	6	5	2	8
5	8	7	9	3	2	1	4	6
1	6	2	4	5	8	9	7	3
8	7	1	3	2	5	6	9	4
3	2	4	7	6	9	8	5	1
6	9	5	8	4	1	2	3	7

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ARGAN TREES — **Solution: 4 letters**

N	A	S	N	O	I	T	S	E	G	I	D	E	P	I
G	U	R	S	N	I	O	J	V	T	F	D	P	S	N
G	N	T	G	Ⓤ	Ⓢ	Ⓔ	Ⓢ	R	U	A	A	R	O	R
N	S	A	R	A	O	U	E	E	H	S	A	L	A	O
I	T	F	R	I	N	S	L	S	T	E	G	I	P	H
L	I	N	O	L	E	I	C	E	L	N	N	O	A	T
A	F	C	A	D	E	N	A	R	I	I	C	P	Q	Q
E	E	C	I	E	A	D	T	P	C	C	O	R	U	G
H	N	M	E	R	E	H	P	S	O	I	B	E	I	R
E	E	G	O	O	A	I	O	R	S	B	R	S	F	A
S	B	M	R	S	D	E	O	N	M	N	E	S	E	S
D	A	E	F	I	L	M	T	B	E	R	B	E	R	S
I	O	A	S	O	N	I	P	S	T	Y	P	D	S	E
C	R	O	W	N	S	D	S	R	I	A	P	E	R	S
A	S	O	F	T	E	N	S	T	C	E	T	O	R	P

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Acids, Acne, Aquifers, Argania, Aroma, Bees, Benefits, Berbers, Biosphere, Cosmetic, Crowns, Digestion, Dipping, Erosion, Food, Fruit, Fuel, Gnarled, Grasses, Grind, Healing, Honey, Israel, Joins, Life, Linoleic, Morocco, Nutrients, Oils, Paste, Pressed, Protects, Quern, Rain, Repairs, Reserve, Semidesert, Shade, Soap, Softens, Souss, Spinosa, Stearic, Thorn, Uses

Yesterday's Answer: Respirator

Purchase the NEW **Treasury 36** in time for the holidays! Order online at WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (Contains 75 puzzles.)

NFL struggle vs COVID-19 crisis gets harder

San Francisco 49ers mascot Sourdough Sam gestures during their team's NFL game against the Los Angeles Rams on October 18, 2020 in Santa Clara, CA. AP

NEW YORK (AP)—In every NFL season, there are losing teams who hit December and just want to get to January, get the schedule done and go home.

In 2020, it's all about the league itself getting to January during a pandemic that daily is becoming harder to deal with.

If Week 12 is a harbinger, NFL executives will be doing more scrambling than Lamar Jackson and Kyler Murray. They've already twice postponed the Thanksgiving night showcase game between Baltimore and Pittsburgh, and it's still in jeopardy for Tuesday night with more than 20 Ravens on the COVID-19 list. Denver, thanks to protocol violations by its quarterbacks, started an undrafted rookie wide receiver at the critical position and, unsurprisingly, barely moved the ball.

There also were hefty fines to the Saints and Patriots for not being as diligent about the coronavirus protocols as they need to be.

The NFL deserves praise for getting this far with minimal disruptions compared to what we are seeing in the college game. Yet there is a foreboding environment right now.

Teams have been ordered to steer clear of their facilities on Monday and Tuesday as the pandemic rages across the country. Pro football tries to soldier on, but for how long?

"I think we have to really consider a bubble," says Bill Cowher, the Hall of Fame-bound coach and now a CBS Sports analyst. "When you think about the country right now, we're going through a second wave. You have to be flexible in your thinking.

"We're talking about shutting down facilities. We're talking about teams that may not be able to practice all week. I start to think about teams later on as we go through this, that they get out of the playoffs. They become more reckless and careless with their actions off the field.

"I think right now from a competitive and balance standpoint that's out there, and from a safety standpoint that's out there, go to a bubble. Go to a city right now, identify a hotel, take all the staff members, put them in there, and make sure from that point they bus to and from practice. They fly to and from games. It worked in hockey. It worked in basketball. I think the time is now. Protect the integrity of the game. It's the fairest thing to do. And it's the safest thing to do."

In some ways it also is the most difficult thing to do. Don't think that the NFL hasn't discussed the bubble idea, though it has concentrated on creating one or more for the playoffs. Doing so for the final six weeks of the schedule, it's a logistical challenge tantamount to scoring on the 1985 Bears or 2000 Ravens.

As the number of COVID-19 cases rises across the league, the potential for more postponements —even cancellations or forfeits, neither of which the NFL truly wants to ponder — also rises.

One option that seems more logical by the day is for the league to create a Week 18 for the second weekend in January. With outbreaks within teams a higher likelihood than ever — and having a week to play with because the bye between the conference championships and the Super Bowl could be eliminated—instituting a Week 18 has its merits.

Certainly it would lessen the chance of mismatches such as what happened Sunday in Denver, a 31-3 Saints romp that never was in doubt; is that the way NFL games should be? And it could help avoid what could be a similar lopsided contest in Pittsburgh on Tuesday night, should that game be played.

"I don't think weird is the right word," said Saints coach Sean Payton, whose team was fined $500,000 and docked a seventh-round draft pick for repeatedly defying NFL protocols. "Look, everything about this season's unusual. So, we kind of tune out the things we can't control. ... And then what it is we can control? And let's find a way to get our next W."

Do coaches really want that next W, or next L, to come because they or their opponent is severely undermanned due to the invisible enemy that is the coronavirus? If so, that's as cold as Lambeau Field in the midst of winter.

Browns center JC Tretter, the president of the NFL Players Association, last week addressed the issues pro football is facing.

"As you see, we said it from the beginning, we are kind of susceptible to what the country and what our local communities are going through," he said. "We are seeing huge spikes in cases around the country, which just increases the likelihood of cases coming from the outside into the building. That is what you are seeing is, as the cases around the country have spiked, so have our cases. Our cases having gone up league-wide, and that is why the protocols are so important about keeping the season going and keeping guys healthy and not allowing that virus to spread once it gets into the building."

There are five more weeks of trying to do so, and recent results have been distressing.

Metcalf, Wilson lead Seahawks over Eagles

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — DK Metcalf got extra motivation he didn't even need.

Metcalf caught 10 passes for 177 yards, Russell Wilson threw for 230 yards and a touchdown and the Seattle Seahawks beat the Philadelphia Eagles 23-17 on Monday night.

Before the game, Metcalf said Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz, who coached Calvin Johnson in Detroit, compared him to the former Lions star.

"I'm getting a little respect, but you know I still got work to do. One of the defensive coaches came up to me and it kind of made me mad that he was like, 'You know, I was in Detroit with Megatron but you're not there yet,'" Metcalf said. "In my mind, I'm not trying to be Megatron. I'm trying to be me. So, I had a little chip on my shoulder the whole game."

The Seahawks (8-3) moved one game ahead of the Rams in the NFC West. The Eagles (3-7-1) fell a half-game behind the Giants and Washington in the woeful NFC East.

Carson Wentz didn't cede many snaps to backup Jalen Hurts but had another rough game. He was 25 of 45 for 215 yards, two TDs—one in garbage time—and one interception.

Seattle's defense entered the game allowing the most yards in the NFL and most yards passing but held Philadelphia's inept offense to 250 yards.

Metcalf was on the board when the Eagles took J.J. Arcega-Whiteside in the second round with the 57th pick in 2019. Arcega-Whiteside has 12 career catches and was a healthy inactive before landing on the COVID-19 list. Metcalf, who was the final pick of the second round, had the best game of his rookie year in Seattle's playoff win at Philadelphia last season and again showed why he's one of the best receivers in the NFL.

Metcalf's 52-yard catch on third-and-13 set up Wilson's 1-yard TD pass to David Moore that gave the Seahawks a 7-0 lead.

"It's kind of like coming home, a place that had a chance to draft me but they didn't so I've got to make them pay," Metcalf said.

Cornerback Darius Slay, who followed Metcalf in coverage, called it the worst game of his career.

"I lost every 50-50 ball. I let the team down. I gotta play better," Slay said.

Chris Carson made it 14-0 when he bullied his way through Philadelphia's defense on a 16-yard run.

"You know me, I saw that end zone so my game is physical so I wanted to get it in," Carson said.

The Eagles didn't get a first down until Wentz ran for 20 yards with under five minutes left in the first half. Wentz scrambled for 13 yards on third-and-5 to keep the drive going and tossed a 3-yard TD pass to Dallas Goedert to cut it to 14-6 at halftime. Jake Elliott missed the extra point wide left.

Elliott's 42-yard field goal cut it to 14-9 in the third quarter. Jason Myers hit one from 44 yards to extend it to 17-9.

After a holding call on Cedric Ogbuehi negated a 17-yard TD run by Carlos Hyde, Myers connected from 33 yards. He hit another one from 39.

Richard Rodgers caught a tipped ball on a desperation heave by Wentz for a 33-yard TD in the final minute.

Trailing by 11, Eagles coach Doug Pederson passed up a field goal and went for it on fourth-and-4 from the Seahawks 15. Wentz's pass went straight to Seattle's Quandre Diggs as Goedert turned the other way on the route.

Meanwhile, the Baltimore Ravens' struggle to contain an extended outbreak of the coronavirus forced their rescheduled game Tuesday night against the unbeaten Pittsburgh Steelers to be moved back to Wednesday afternoon.

It's the third fix to a matchup originally slated to be played Thanksgiving night. The game will remain on NBC, but at 3:40 p.m. ET.

Also, the Steelers' home game in Week 13 against Washington has been moved from Sunday to Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. The Ravens home game against Dallas will be on Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 8:05 p.m. on Fox and NFL Network. It was originally set for Thursday night, then moved to Dec. 7.

The NFL permitted the Ravens to return to their facility on Monday night under doctors' supervision.

Ready or not, NBA training camps to open

CALIFORNIA (AP)—For the Los Angeles Lakers and Miami Heat, it was the shortest offseason ever. For the eight teams that haven't played since March, the offseason dragged for longer than most seasons last. And for all 30 clubs, questions are far more prevalent than answers these days.

Ready or not, the NBA is back.

Training camps open around the league Tuesday, though on-court sessions will be limited to individual workouts and only for those players who have gotten three negative coronavirus test results back in the last few days. Mandatory "group training activities," another way to describe what would otherwise be called practice, will begin in some cities Friday and for most clubs Sunday, the league said.

"I feel like a kid getting excited for the first day of school again," Atlanta guard Trae Young tweeted.

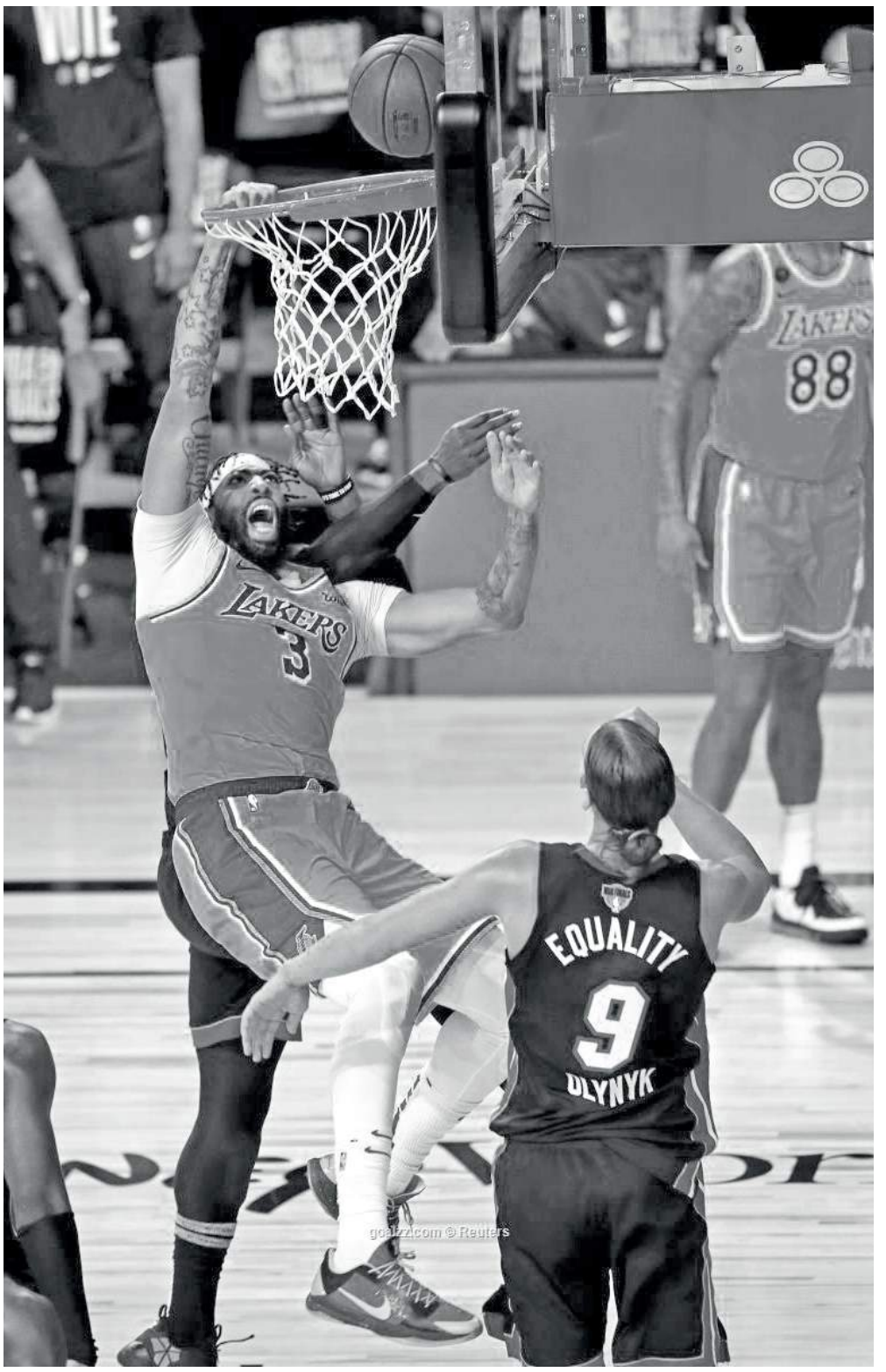
As is the case with school, there will be tests in NBA camps. Lots of them.

Players and coaches will be tested for coronavirus daily around the league, and a positive test at this point would likely derail someone for most of camp and probably into the preseason. The rules are so strict that clubs cannot even hold a team dinner on the eve of training camp; the NBA isn't allowing those to take place until at least Dec. 11, or the start of Phase 4 in the league's five-phase plan for health and safety.

"We're all going to have to be very nimble, first of all keeping guys safe and healthy," Utah general manager Justin Zanik said Monday. "We'll get an idea of the schedule, how travel is, how the pandemic affects us. ... No one in the NBA, other than a three-month bubble, has ever gone through what we're about to go through."

Preseason is less than two weeks away, starting Dec. 11. The regular season starts on Dec. 22, three weeks from Tuesday. A schedule for the first half of the shortened 72-game regular season could be known in the coming days, and many teams are still deciding if they can begin the season with fans in their arenas or not. The NBA champion Lakers have already said they aren't having fans in their building to start the season; Charlotte and Oklahoma City announced Monday that they will begin their home schedules the same way.

"This is going to be a challenging season for us," Phoenix general manager James Jones said. "We're going to do everything in our power to make sure that we try to stay COVID-free and try to stay healthy. With 72 games in a condensed season and more or increased back-to-backs means that we'll have to manage our time appropriately."



AP

In this Sept. 30, 2020 file photo, Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis (3) dunks against the Miami Heat during the second half of Game 1 of the NBA Finals in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

For nine coaches—Tom Thibodeau in New York, Steve Nash in Brooklyn, Billy Donovan in Chicago, Doc Rivers in Philadelphia, Nate Bjorkgren in Indiana, Stan Van Gundy in New Orleans, Stephen Silas in Houston, Mark Daigneault in Oklahoma City and Tyronn Lue with the Los Angeles Clippers—this week marks the formal start of their on-court tenures with their clubs.

It'll also be the first training camp as head coach for J.B. Bickerstaff in Cleveland; he took over as coach of the Cavaliers in February.

Some teams haven't played since March 11. Others saw their seasons resume in July, then end in August or September. And for the Lakers and the Heat, the NBA finalists, the season went until mid-October.

Not even two months later, it's time to play again.

"I think it's fair to say that coming into the season, given everything that's going on in the country relative to COVID and the effects that it's having on everybody both locally and nationally, this is going to be a pretty unique season," Oklahoma City general manager Sam Presti said.

"We've never been through a season like this before. No team has."

AD, agent to meet with Lakers

Anthony Davis and his agent, Rich Paul of Klutch Sports, are scheduled to meet with the Lakers and general manager Rob Pelinka on Tuesday, according to people with knowledge of the situation not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Davis opted out of the final year of his contract to become a free agent. The sort of contract Davis seeks remains a mystery.

The 6-foot-10 forward has plenty of options before joining the club for training camp, which officially opens Tuesday around the NBA. Teams, though, can't practice in full because of COVID-19 health and safety protocols, which allow for only four players and four coaches to be in the training facility at one time.

Davis can sign a two-year contract with a player option for the 2021-22 season worth about $68 million. That would set him up to become a free agent at the same time as LeBron James. Davis can sign a three-year contract with a player option for the 2022-23 season for about $106 million. He can sign a four-year extension for about $146.7 million or a five-year deal for about $189 million.

Davis was a force for the Lakers during the 2019-20 regular season. He was first in scoring (26.1), rebounding (9.3), blocks (2.3) and steals (1.5) and third in assists (3.2). He was first in the playoffs in scoring (27.7) and second in rebounds (9.7).

The Lakers have fortified their roster this offseason through trades for point guard Dennis Schroder and center Marc Gasol as well as the free-agent signings of center Montrezl Harrell and guard Wesley Matthews. The club also re-signed guard Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and forwards Markieff Morris and Jared Dudley, who agreed to terms Monday on a one-year, $2.6-million contract.

Gone from the core of last season's championship team are Avery Bradley, Danny Green, Dwight Howard, JaVale McGee, Rajon Rondo and Quinn Cook as well as late-season additions J.R. Smith and Dion Waters.

Tokyo Games won't confirm added costs reported at $3B

TOKYO (AP)—Organizers of the delayed Tokyo Olympics have declined to confirm widely circulated reports in Japan that the costs of the one-year postponement will be about $3 billion.

The estimates have been published in the last several days by some of Japan's top-circulation newspapers, the national broadcaster NHK, and the Japanese news agency Kyodo. All are citing similar figures and unidentified sources close to the games.

"We are in the process of assessing the additional costs associated with the postponement of the games due to COVID-19 and therefore are not able to comment on any details at this time," Tokyo organizers said Monday in a statement.

The statement did not challenge any of the reports.

The Tokyo Games are becoming very expensive.

The official cost of putting on the Tokyo Olympics is $12.6 billion. However, a government audit last year said it was probably twice that much. All but $5.6 billion is public money.

Tokyo said the games would cost $7.3 billion when it won the bid in 2013.

The $3 billion for the delay only adds to the totals. A University of Oxford study published early this year—calculated before the postponement—said Tokyo was the most expensive Summer Olympics on record and the meter is still running.

The Yomiuri newspaper and Kyodo on Sunday detailed added costs of 200 billion yen, about $2 billion, to renegotiate venues leases, pay staff salaries, and cover other operational expenditure.

NHK and the Asahi newspaper on Monday said another 100 billion yen, about $1 billion, was needed for countermeasures against COVID-19. This could include the cost of vaccines, rapid testing, and countless precautions to guard against the coronavirus.

The reported cost of the delay because of the pandemic is in line with repeated estimates of between $2 billion and $3 billion in Japan over the last several months.

The organizers, the Tokyo metro government and the Japanese national government are expected to explain added costs in December and detail how they will be shared.

Organizers in October said they had found cost-savings of about $280 million by simplifying and cutting some frills from next year's postponed games. This was about 2% of the official costs.

The International Olympic Committee has said it would chip in about $650 million to cover some of the costs of the delay, but has offered few public details.

The Switzerland-based IOC is heavily dependent on revenue from selling broadcast rights, which account for almost three-quarters of its income.

The unprecedented postponement has put financial pressure on the IOC, national Olympic committees, and international sports federations that heavily rely on the IOC for sustenance.

Domestic sponsors in Japan have paid a record of $3.3 billion to organizers, but there are reports of some balking at further payments during the pandemic-caused economic slide.

The Olympics are to open on July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on Aug. 24. They involve 15,400 athletes and ten of thousands of officials, judges, staff, VIPs, sponsors as well as media and broadcasters.

Cubs to tender Bryant a contract, trade unlikely at deadline

CHICAGO—Kris Bryant's future with the Cubs is a major topic of discussion this winter, but two reports from Monday suggest he'll be with the club through a notable upcoming date on the offseason calendar.

MLB insider Jon Heyman reported the Cubs will tender Bryant a contract ahead of Wednesday's 7om non-tender deadline, and MLB Network's Jon Morosi reported the third baseman isn't expected to be traded before that deadline.

Heyman added Bryant is a trade target for the Nationals, following up previous reports from Morosi and Jesse Dougherty of the Washington Post stating the Nationals could explore such a move Bryant is under team control through next season. But, following a season of revenue losses, there has been speculation about whether the Cubs would non-tender the former MVP this winter as they trim their payroll. Among the other Cubs hitters under team control through 2021, Bryant carries the highest projected salary.

However, non-tendering Bryant would mean losing him for nothing. And considering the Cubs are looking to remain competitive in 2021 and beyond, a trade could net future assets.

The Cubs are also looking to retool their roster this winter, so if they do trade Bryant, other moves might follow.

In this undated file photo, the Cubs' Kris Bryant, left, is tagged out by the Braves' Johan Camargo while trying to steal third base during the first inning of a baseball game at SunTrust Park in Atlanta.

Meanwhile, the Royals agreed to a two-year deal with pitcher Mike Minor and finalized a $1.75 million, one-year contract with outfielder Michael Taylor as they work to piece together a roster.

The deal with the 32-year-old Minor was reached late Sunday and requires him to pass a physical before it can be completed. Taylor's deal, announced Monday, includes up to $1 million in incentives.

The Royals have not had a winning season since 2015, when they reached the second of back-to-back World Series and won their first championship in 30 years. The core from that season became free agents and general manager Dayton Moore began to rebuild through the draft, and after a couple of seasons near .500 came back-to-back 100-loss campaigns.

But there were signs during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season that the rebuild was on track. Young pitchers such as Brady Singer and Kris Bubic got their first taste of the big leagues, veterans Danny Duffy and Brad Keller anchored a vastly improved starting rotation, and a bullpen that was historically bad the previous season returned significant gains.

Still, there remain plenty of holes in the roster. Minor and Taylor fill two of them.

Minor resurrected his career three years ago in Kansas City, when he had a 2.55 ERA in 65 games and went 6 for 6 in save opportunities. But eager to return to a starting rotation, the left-hander signed a three-year deal with Texas that offseason, and he went 14-10 with a 3.59 ERA in 2019 before he was traded to Oakland for the stretch run last season.

Minor's versatility will come in handy, providing the Royals with starting depth but also help in the back end of the bullpen.

"There's not a whole lot I'm going to say about that because there's more things that need to be buttoned up, if you will, before we can officially make any type of announcement," Moore said, "but we are looking for more depth with our starting pitching experience in that role, especially with the young starters we have on the horizon.

"We don't want to put the workload entirely on a young group," Moore added. "We're looking for guys that can give us possibly 200 innings or so, especially in this current climate we're in, so we're going to continue to be aggressive."

The 29-year-old Taylor hit just .196 in 38 games with the Nationals last season, then became a free agent Oct. 15 when he refused an outright assignment to the minor leagues. The Royals believe he can bounce back at the plate while providing a defensive presence in centerfield in spacious Kauffman Stadium. Taylor was a finalist for the Gold Glove in 2017, when he also hit a career-best .271 with 19 homers in just 113 games and earned a World Series ring.

Springer, McCann on Mets' radar

Mets continue to pursue free agent outfielder George Springer despite reported heavy interest from the Toronto Blue Jays, according to industry sources.

Springer is one of the Mets' top targets this offseason, if not the top target, and remains heavily in the mix.

Sources outside the organization also see the Mets' interest in free agent catcher James McCann as potentially serious. At the moment, the Mets are after McCann more than J.T. Realmuto.

With Sandy Alderson running baseball operations, the Mets are not waiting until they hire a general manager to conduct offseason business. Alderson and his lieutenants are busy talking to agents and other teams.

Of course, free agent pitcher Trevor Bauer is also on the Mets' radar, although there are mixed indications in the industry regarding how serious the mutual interest is.

It is worth remembering that free agency is a fluid process. If Springer chooses another team, the Mets could pivot to be more aggressive on another front. But this is the state of the team's pursuits as of this moment. ***(AP/NBC)***

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lar, Benjamin Cai, Joey Xia, Daniel Huang, and alternate Ratul Bhuya. Sikkel, on the other hand, will team up with Evan Poole, Aiden Camacho, Aikeen Edvalson, Scarlett Burrell, and Sophia Smith.

Besides the Top 3 finish in the individual races, elementary school runners will also compete for team honors. To qualify for the team championship, each school must field at least four runners (two boys and two girls). A school can enter a maximum of six runners in the finale, but only the results of its Top 4 finishers will be counted to determine the team champion. Entries were limited this season as a safety precaution against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Joining Agape and Brilliant Star in this weekend's championship race are William S. Reyes Elementary School, Saipan International School, Kagman Elementary School, Mt. Carmel School, Isla Montessori, and Rota's Sinapalo Elementary School.

Rota students were not required to compete in the qualifiers and were given automatic slots to the finals. The visiting school will be represented by siblings Jimmy, Krisha, and Calev Aguero, Tyrone Pinaula, Mikayla Masga, Guadalipe Weilbacher, and alternate Keisha Fay Atalig.

Isla Montessori also has a complete team in George Baetge, Katie Manglona, Oliver and Addison Pauling, Jackson Kong, Cooper Fong, and alternate Philip James Seman. SIS will have a loaded roster, too with Finn Altizer leading the Geckos and joining forces with Elizabeth Culp, Faith Arriola, Landon Pudney, Windsor Gross, Suki Peng, and alternate Aubrey White.

Mt. Carmel and Kagman have five students each joining the final race with Franco Tudela, Henry and Stephen Yeom, Daniel Kang, and Gabriela Hernandez suiting up for the Knights and Paige Blanco, Harley, Benaiah, and Bear Americus Murphy, and Jacob Santos running for the Marlins. Rounding out the elementary division finalists are WSR's Mateo Almada, Elijan Carreon, Marq Hernandez, Jiro Quindoza, Kristen Sierra, and Alliyah Villacrusis.

TOGAWA

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points, hurting his chances to overtake Alvarez for the top overall rankings in the Minis 1 and 2. Mini 1 class is for riders utilizing 65cc 2 stroke to 110 cc 4 stroke bikes, while Mini 2 participants use 85cc (2 stroke)-150cc (4 stroke), but MRA combined the two divisions since only five raced last Sunday.

M.J. Camacho (42 points) and Ethan (36) and Devin (32) Yumul were the other competitors in the division. Camacho was ranked second on Heat 1 and third on Heat 2, while Ethan placed fourth in both heats, and Devin came in fifth.

JOSEPH CHIN

Riders in the Minis 1 and 2 class get ready at the starting line.

Besides the pewee, ATV, and Minis 1 and 2 races, MRA also hosted competitions for veteran, expert, novice, and adult ATV classes and results of these races will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Thursday issue.

JOSEPH CHIN

Harley Susulin concentrates as she rides the course at the Kan Pacific grounds.

NFL struggle vs COVID-19 crisis gets harder

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JOSEPH CHIN
Riders in the peewee and ATV divisions head out to the course during the Marianas Racing Association races held last Sunday at the Kan Pacific grounds.

Togawa, Borja outrace foes

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Keenon Togawa and Theresa Borja ruled their respective competitions in the Marianas Racing Association's tournament held last Sunday at the Kan Pacific grounds.

Togawa clinched the top honors in the peewee class, as he won both Heats 1 and 2 of the division, besting four other competitors. The 7-year-old rider collected 25 points each from his first place finishes on Heat 1 (forward) and 2 (reverse) for the 8-point victory over Ezekiel Camacho.

Camacho placed third on Heat 1 and received 20 points. He then moved up to second overall, as he had a better showing in the final heat, getting the No. 2 spot (22 points) behind Togawa. Heat 1 runner-up finisher Bently Koshiro, who took 22 points after the first race, dropped to fifth on Heat 2 and earned 16 points to settle for the fourth spot.

Harley Susulin booted Koshiro out of the Top 3 finish, as the 8-year-old climbed to third place on Heat 2 after ending up at fourth spot in the first heat. Susulin and Koshiro collected 38 points apiece after the two heats, but the former won the tiebreak due to her better ranking on Heat 2. Zane Fujihira rounded out the finishers list in the peewee class (dirt bike).

In the ATV class, Borja won her one-on-one race against Harley's younger sister, 4-year-old Brooklyn.

Alvarez noses out Taimanao

Meanwhile, there was a close race for first place in the Minis 1 and 2 class with Mari Alvarez slipping past E.J. Taimanao.

Alvarez got off to a strong start when she prevailed on Heat 1 to notch 25 points. On Heat 2, the lone female rider in the division fell to second place, but it was enough to gain her additional 22 points for a 2-point victory over Taimanao, 47-45.

Taimanao ruled Heat 2 to bag 25 points, but he finished only third on Heat 1 for 20

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Alvarez

Borja

Togawa

56 sign up for cross country finale

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Elementary students compete in the first leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System/Northern Marianas Athletics All Schools Cross Country Series last month at the CPA Airport Field.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

More than 50 runners have registered for the elementary division finale in the 2020-2021 Public School System/Northern Marianas Athletics All Schools Cross Country Series.

Agape Christian School's Jessie Campbell, who won all three qualifiers (Heat 2) in the co-ed U11 division, and Heat 1 two-time winner Moshe Sikkel of Brilliant Star School will lead the 56 finalists as they conclude the season this Friday at the CPA Airport Field.

Joining Campbell on Agape's team are Alice Duan, Reyviel Van Escar-

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